THE OFFICIAL SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE

SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE

SEGA No.1 FOR SATURN

ISSUE 29 £2.95
MARCH 1998



YOU'RE THE FIRE STARTER!

BURNING RANGERS HOT! HOT! HOT!

HOUSE OF THE DEAD

BLOODY BRILLIANT!

SEGA RALLY 2 EXCLUSIVE!

PLUS! PANZER DRAGOON SAGA, GRANDIA, SHINING FORCE 3, WINTER HEAT, DJ WARS, CHILL, BOMBERMAN: FIGHT, REAL BOUT SPECIAL, ZAP! '98... AND MORE!

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The MAGIC is back!
Sega Rally 2

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Features



Grandia is one of the Saturn's most stunning titles. SSM investigates!



Not too hot as a one-player game, but with a few mates Bomberman's great!



What can we say? This game is going to amaze you as it did us!



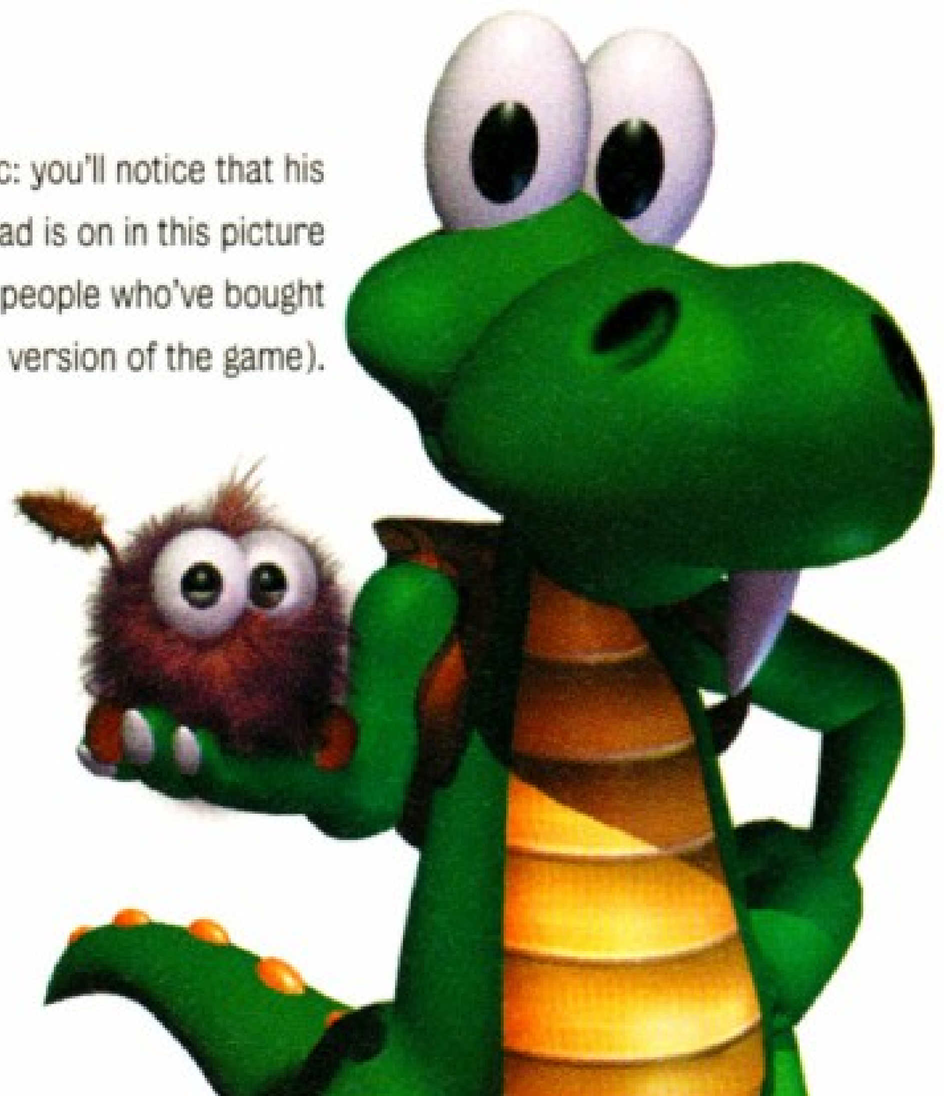
Advanced Model 3 visuals make Sega Rally 2 one of the most sensational arcade games we've ever seen. It's all down to those lovely AM Annex people.

Previews

Reviews

Regulars

Playing Tips



Here's Croc: you'll notice that his head is on in this picture (in-joke to all people who've bought the UK version of the game).

HOUSE OF THE DEAD

AM1 lightgun bloodfest rocks big-time! Let the carnage commence!



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Burning Rangers

Sonic Team's latest is simply awe-inspiring!

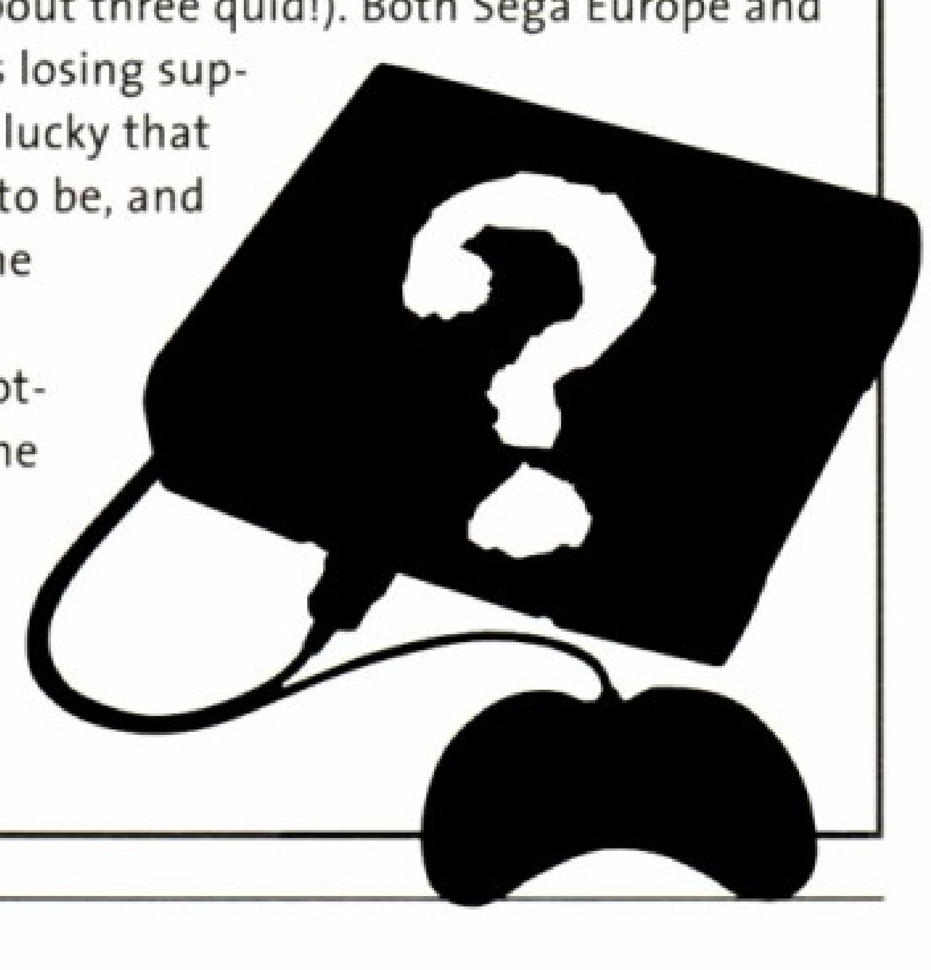
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Burning Rangers is just too hot to handle!

NEWS

It's been a tough month for the Saturn as Sega suffers indignity after indignity. Outside of Japan the firm has lost its way big time - there are reports from the States of top-hole Saturn titles being sold off cheap at $4.99 (that's about three quid!). Both Sega Europe and Sega of America have laid off staff and the Saturn is losing support from the industry very quickly. In Europe we're lucky that Sega aren't deserting the Saturn as the US appears to be, and there is a very definite positive story to tell about the Saturn - how else would this issue of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE be as packed with quality as it is? The bottom line is that it comes to stunning videogames, the Saturn remains a system that's hard to match - and judging by the games coming up, that's gonna remain the case for a long time to come.
Rich Leadbetter,
Editor

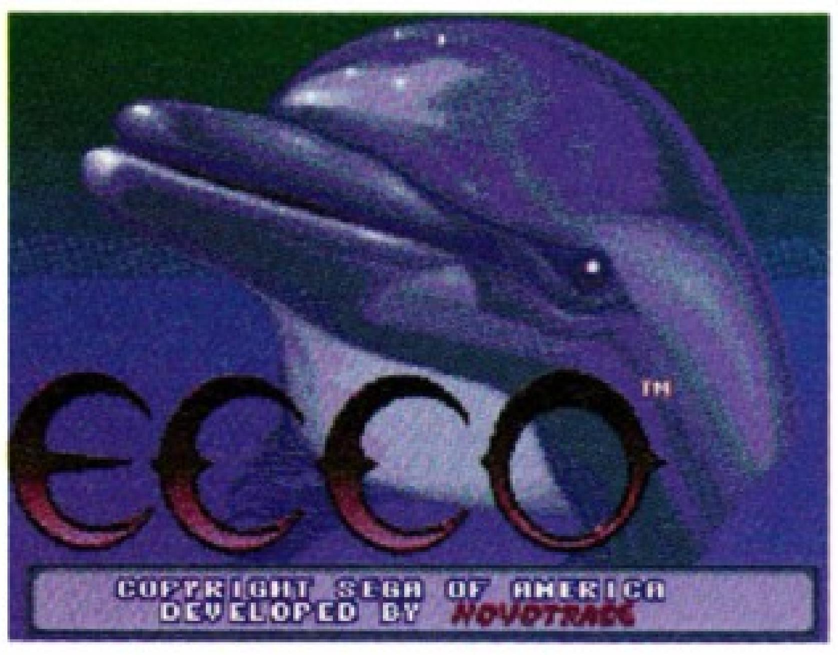


Saturn 2 in the pipeline

New Machine in 1999!

Sega Saturn superseded next year with new machine ■ Model 3 performance means new system will amaze ■ End of 1998 release still expected in Japan ■ Saturn and PC get top billing for Sega in '98

THE SPECULATION CAN END. SEGA have finally confirmed what everyone already knows: they are developing a new machine. But it won't come out in Europe until Spring, 1999. It has been a bad month for Sega across the globe. In Japan, N64 software sales overtook Saturn's for the first time since the machine launched. In the US, the axe fell on 30% of Sega's staff with third parties pulling out of Saturn development altogether. Poor sales and what can only be viewed as a half-assed approach to the machine from Sega of America itself are the two most common reasons proffered. It's been left up to Sega Europe to pick up the pieces. The day after the American layoffs, the UK operation announced the reasons for the mass sackings: Sega's new machine will not launch in 1998 and therefore the extra staff are surplus to requirements - there's little to promote as such. This year will be spent concentrating on the Sega Saturn and Sega PC businesses, while plans are laid for the launch of the next generation machine in the spring of next year.



A return for some of Sega's most famous 16-bit heroes is on the cards for the new machine. Original coders Novotrade are hotly tipped to be bringing Ecco to the new system in an awesome 3D adventure!

ANNOUNCEMENT? WHAT ANNOUNCEMENT?

Considering the stakes, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE was disappointed with the contents of its most recent announcement. So the new machine's coming out in 1999? What about its capabilities? What about the games? What about the all-important third party support? What is its name for crying out loud?!

Since no announcements emanated from Sega of Japan, it's clear that nothing is going to be released information-wise for some time yet... and what does emerge will come from SoJ first. We've been told by Sega that more announcements will be made in "weeks", perhaps in reference to the March Tokyo Game Show which is being sponsored jointly by Sega and Microsoft (the two major partners masterminding the new system's specs). Despite the West not getting the new machine until 1999, SoJ's current plans are to release the machine with a clutch of Model 3 arcade conversions at the latter end of this year. We'll know more next month.



Model 3 level power in the new Sega machine makes the possibility of an arcade-perfect Virtua Fighter 3 (pictured) a reality! Already we're getting quite excited.



The Sonic Team are the jewel in the crown of Sega's Consumer Software divisions. Expect big things from them on the new system. Could Sonic be returning to his former glory?





Fighting Vipers 2 is a good possibility...



The new Virtual On is a likely candidate for translation. A conversion of Sega Rally 2 for the new machine seems a "racing certainty".



WHAT WE THINK

Sega Europe believe that PlayStation 2 will not launch until the millennium - therefore they feel no urge to rush-release the new machine. They believe that part of the Saturn's failure to achieve the success it deserved was down to the quality software arriving later rather than at launch. This time they're willing to wait until they've got everything 100% right. By then N64 will be technically outdated and the new Sony system should still be a year off from a European launch. This is excellent news for the new machine and hopefully bodes well for Sega's commitment to the Saturn.

What is perhaps most exciting about the new machine is the involvement of Microsoft in the project. At the recent New Years Sega party in Japan, the president of SoJ revealed Microsoft's involvement with the new project, with the master himself, Bill Gates, revealing that he has pledged Microsoft's support to the new platform.

This means a Windows-based operating system for the new machine and advanced networking capabilities, which bodes well for the future of online multiplayer videogames (an experiment SoJ are still experimenting with).

With a Windows base, the new machine should also benefit from a huge amount of third party software. Apparently converting games from top-end PCs to the new format is very easy indeed. Truly the days of spending huge amounts of effort translating PC games to console (as with the Saturn) are now over.

But the bottom line is that for the here and now, Sega remains committed to the Saturn - but we need to see more games. The Saturn is still a powerful machine and its owners deserve the best. Will we get it though? Let's hope so...

Microsoft's involvement guarantees the big time for the next Sega system - expect to be amazed. More details soon.



Scud Race is looking unlikely for conversion to the new system. BUT Daytona 2 is coming to the arcades soon and is ripe for translation!

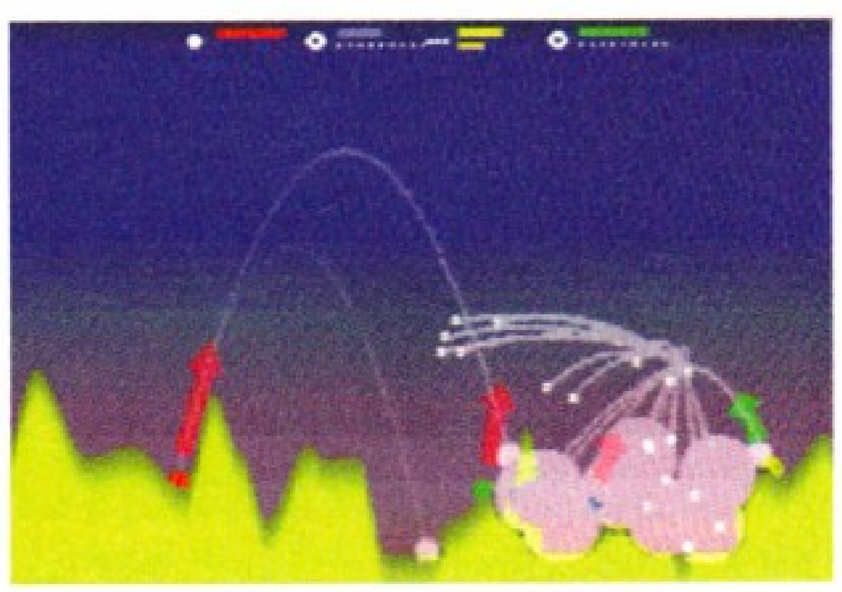
CD debacle

Oops!

APOLOGIES ARE DUE FROM BOTH US and Sega for the non-appearance (again) of our scheduled demo CD. As regular readers will know, we guaranteed you a CD with awesome demos of Duke Nukem 3D, Quake, Exhumed and DeathTank. Unfortunately, despite the disc STILL being ready to rock, Sega didn't get permission from id software to run the Quake demo. So we're forced to wait another month.

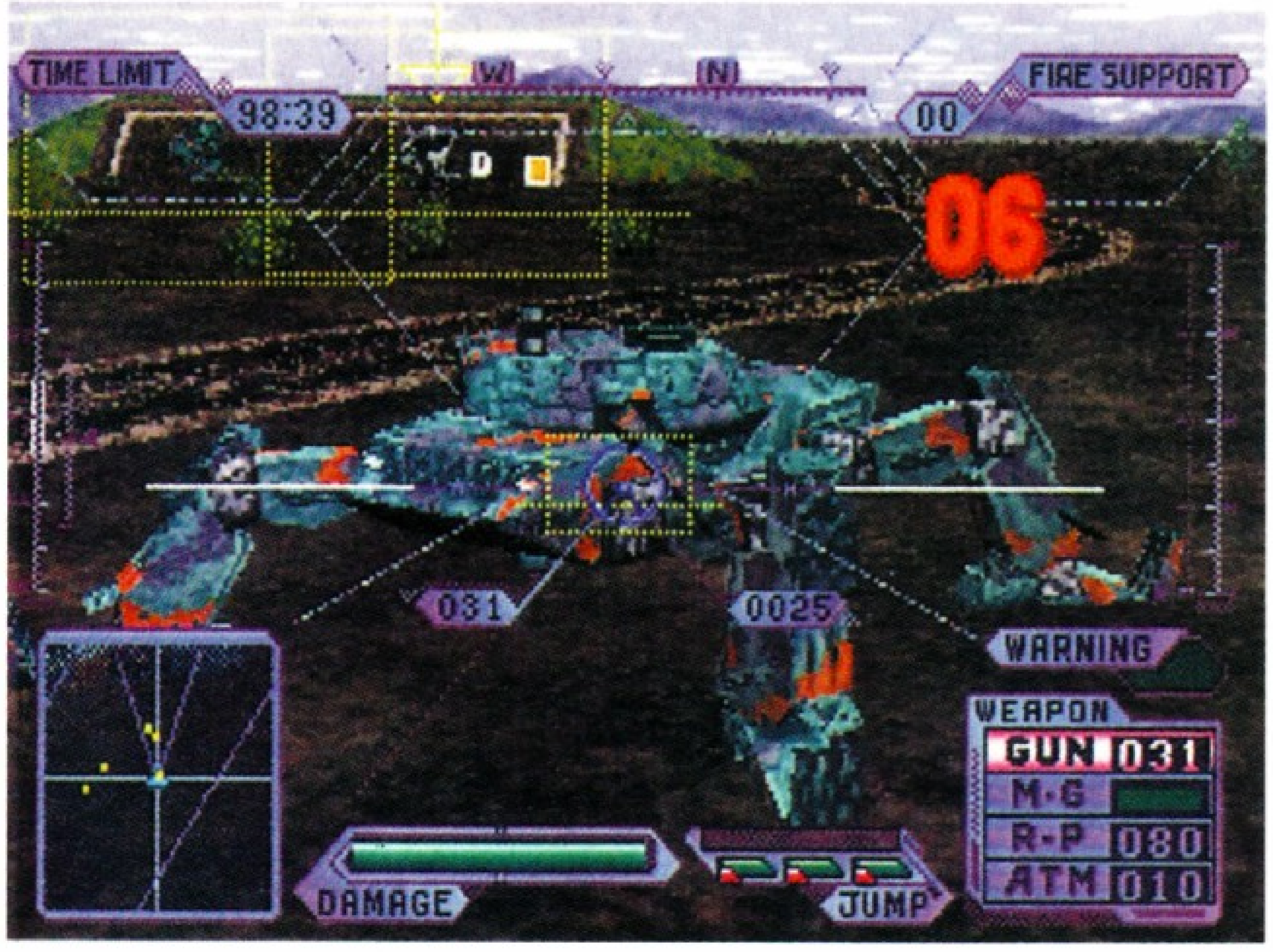
No-one is more frustrated than us at this turn of events, considering that the software has been ready since before Christmas. HOPEFULLY the situation will be sorted in time for the next issue. We now know better than to promise anything definite, but we're trying to do our best here. The good news is that by way of compensation, the disc contains the FULL VERSION OF DEATHTANK ZWEI! Yes, the greatest multiplayer game on the Saturn will hopefully be on the cover of next month's SSM in its entirety, if all goes to plan.

Oh, and by the way, the next Sega Flash disc is being prepared as we speak and its contents are astonishing! More news soon.



New Game

Gun Griffon 2 This Time It's Personal!



GameArts are continuing with their prolific range of stunning Saturn produce with the imminent arrival of Gun Griffon 2. This sequel promises to be a huge step up over the original with a superior graphical engine, more detailed enemies, better artificial intelligence and even a two-player mode! It's not known if the game opts for a split-screen or link-up mode, but it's thought that GameArts have opted for the latter (the link-up cable is easily obtained in Japan). As you can see from the screenshots, this game looks seriously cool, and should be in Japanese stores by March. Since the first game was picked up by Sega Europe, we can but hope that they're looking at a UK launch for the sequel...



A cool intro shows off the Saturn's FMV skills.



Options aplenty, but what's the gameplay like?



Do GameArts have what it takes to top the original Gun Griffon? We certainly hope so!

New Game

Enix Hit Saturn!





Not as great as Croc, but still worth a look.

ENIX ARE ONE OF JAPAN'S MOST respected companies, with a vast range of quality RPGs and action titles to their credit. And now they've moved onto the Saturn. Ninpen Manmaru is an extremely weird game, and a complete departure to the firm's previous efforts. Rather than opt for another gaming epic, Enix have released an odd, super-simplistic platform game. You take control of a cute ninja penguin whose sole aim in existence appears to be climbing up to reach the highest part of any given platform-strewn arena. Once you've leapt onto the summit of the stage, you're whisked onto the next. Things gradually get more complicated until an intricate path has to be worked out to reach each level's exit. We told you - weird.

Ninpen Manmaru is probably too simple or too bizarre to be worth picking up should you chance upon it in an import shop, but it's an er... interesting game, which has garnered decent reviews in Japan.



He's a ninja, he's a penguin... he's Ninpen Manmaru, the star of Enix's new Saturn game!





The game's 3D certainly seems solid enough.

News In Brief

Tokyo Game Show

THE NEXT MAJOR DATES IN THE gaming world's diary will be March 20th-22nd 1998. That's when the Tokyo Game Show takes place and hordes or console owners will descend on the event at the Makuhari Messe International Convention Centre.



This year's TGS should be a red hot gamesfest!

Similar to past events, the spring show allows exhibitors to let gamers play forthcoming titles while also unveiling their new product line-ups.

As always the Tokyo Game Show will be bigger than ever with 89 companies scheduled to exhibit at the event. Using eight massive halls at the Makuhari Messe, the TGS will be 33% larger than last year's autumn event. This show is of vital importance to Saturn owners as it will be supported by Sega in collaboration with Microsoft. Regular readers will recognise this pairing of industry giants as they're combining their talents for Sega's forthcoming mystery home console. In addition to the massive range of games on display at the show, there will also be live stage events, costume competitions and game goods on sale as well.

Companies displaying their wares will include Konami, Capcom, Namco, Sony Computer Entertainment, Squaresoft, Bandai, Microsoft, Sega, ESP, Taito and Hudsonsoft. While we here at SSM are expecting Sega's new machine to make a surprise appearance (fingers crossed), our sources have confirmed that the following games will be at the show:



D2, House of the Dead, Gun Griffon 2, King of Fighters '97, Suikoden, Psychic Force, Dragon Quest 2, Dungeon & Dragons Collection, Shining Force III Part 2, Vampire Saviour, Dracula X, Astra Superstars, Pocket Fighter, MSH vs Capcom and Sonic the Fighters!

Introducing...

World League Soccer '98

Awesome new football game revealed! ■ Incredible hi-res visuals virtually indistinguishable from high spec PC version ■ May release planned ■ SWWS beater?

WHEN IT COMES TO TOP-QUALITY footie sims, the discerning Saturn owner needn't stray too far from Sega's own WorldWide Soccer games. Until now that is. SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE have been privileged enough to sample an almost complete version of Silicon Dreams' forthcoming footie extravaganza, World League Soccer '98, and came away very impressed indeed.

Currently languishing in an 80% complete form, Silicon Dreams' uncompromising Saturn programmer has pushed Sega's 32-bit hardware to its limits resulting in an outstanding soccer title. Take the visuals for example. Each of the stadiums, players and pitches has been portrayed in crisp high-resolution and the game runs at a slick 25 frames per second, making the Saturn rendition virtually indistinguishable from the high-spec PC version. Yep, it's that good. What's more, Sega themselves were so impressed with the game that they've signed it up themselves as part of their summer line-up.



The high-res visuals, smooth frame rate and fast-paced action make this a potential WWS beater.

But whilst there's little doubt in our minds that World League Soccer '98 will become the finest looking sports sim to grace the Saturn to date, it's clear the gameplay is no slouch either. The fast and fluid play is bolstered by some particularly impressive artificial intelligence, not surprising when you consider the football heritage of the company. Amongst the many titles under Silicon Dreams' belt are the well-respected Olympic Soccer and Fever Pitch.

As you'd expect, World League Soccer '98 comes complete with a glut of gameplay variations and options, with 185 league sides (including Premiership), 13 stadiums, and team and kit edit features just a hint of what's on offer. And we're happy to report that Silicon Dreams have signed up Football Italia's Peter Brackley to provide the in-game commentary, whilst football veteran Ray Wilkins provides some excellent post-match analysis.



Looks pretty cool, eh? Well, it'll be out in May!



In fact, the only disappointing news to report is that due to our tight schedule, we were unable to fit World League Soccer '98 into this month's packed issue. However, rest assured we'll have plenty more coverage in the next issue of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE and who knows... maybe even a playable demo!

OUT NOW

They're games. They're out. And more specifically, they're "Out Now." Hence the name. So let's just get on with it, eh? This month it's sport, sport and more bloody sport...

Game of the month

NBA Action '98

BY SEGA 91%

You might think its quite sad that the SSM Game of the Month happens to be a basketball simulation - the sort of game we're usually given to pouring scorn on, laughing and pointing at (occasionally at the same time!). But Sega's NBA Action '98 is the exception that proves the rule: it's actually a great game. The game's advanced graphics engine is a super-smooth delight (in stark contrast to the EA effort) with an intuitive, interesting control system and lightning fast action for a game of this ilk. And as you'd expect, there's a vast amount of options to "tweak" to your liking - like, try 51 of the suckers! Not bad, eh?

There aren't many basketball sims we can recommend, but even if you aren't the proverbial fan of the genre, you're unlikely to be disappointed by what this game offers.





"But why do need ME to pick up this soap?"



Slam dunk da funk with NBA Action '98.

Puckin' Hell!

NHL All-Star Hockey '98

BY SEGA 85%

To all intents and purposes this is merely an update of Virgin's much-delayed PowerPlay Hockey. The thing is, you'd be hard-pressed to find a copy of that quality game in the shops anywhere, so it's good news that Sega have decided to put their "full weight" behind this update. As you'd expect, this game is quality stuff - definitely the best ice hockey game you can get for the Saturn. The action is fast and inevitably furious, the graphics engine is very smooth, and as you'd imagine, there are more options than you can shake a (hockey) stick at. Suffice to say that this is pretty impressive stuff. If by some small chance you already own the first PowerPlay Hockey, this probably isn't for you because the changes aren't hugely significant. However, like Sega's other release, NBA Action, this is undoubtedly the best game of its style you can get.







Give 'em some stick in NHL All-Star Hockey '98.

Hello mediocrity

NBA '98

BY EA 70%

Time was when a new Sega release from Electronic Arts was greeted by much excitement and maybe even the odd fanfare or two. That was in the days of John Madden, Road Rash and the Strike games. On the Megadrive. We're sad to report that once again the proud EA Sports brand has taken a bit of a knock with the release of NBA Live '98. It's definitely an improvement on the abysmal '97 effort, but NBA Live is still light years away from being a good buy. The graphics remain poorly animated, the disc loading (a particular irritation with '97) is still massive and the general feeling is of a PlayStation conversion that takes no advantage of the Saturn's capabilities whatsoever. Average.





Shame of the Month

FIFA '98

BY EA 58%

It's tragic to consider that a company that's had so many Saturn triumphs should end its Sega exploits with a game this bad. A game which just happens to be EA's major franchise earner. The game that is FIFA '98: The Road to the World Cup. On PlayStation and N64, this game isn't too shabby (though ISS still annihilates it on both formats), but the Saturn version truly is terrible. Okay, so the graphics engine isn't really terrible, but the players and animation are pitiful. And the old gameplay flaw of "sweet spots" on the pitch where you're guaranteed to score STILL hasn't been rectified. And what's Paul Ince doing with an eighties Glenn Hoddle haircut?

The one good thing about the game is the sound: the commentary's better than SWWS '98 (not difficult, since it's broken) and Blur's Song 2 remains a classic tune - although obviously getting the CD single is a lot, lot cheaper. No, this just won't do. Get SWWS '98 or wait for the very promising World League Soccer '98. FIFA '98 is nothing more than sheer effrontery on a grand scale.



News In Brief

Sad but true. Third party support for the Sega Saturn has all but vanished. FIFA '98 and the woeful NHL '98 (see page 70) are the last titles to emerge from Electronic Arts, the last Saturn supporter. Fox Interactive's Alien Resurrection has, unfortunately, been canned. As far as we can see, the last Saturn third party title could well be the independently launched Chill (see page 30 for details on this "cool" game).



Yep, we're afraid it's bad news for Alien fans as Fox Interactive's shoot 'em up gets axed.



AM1 are rumoured to be working on a sequel to their impressive Die Hard Arcade game.

By the time you read this, Marvel Super Heroes will FINALLY be out. As predicted by SSM, it's a great game but the PAL conversion is absolutely dreadful... as is becoming increasingly prevalent, unfortunately. You really need to get that 60Hz switch fitted to play this game as Capcom intended. As for Street Fighter Collection... well, that's been delayed until March - just when X-Men vs Street Fighter is due for release.



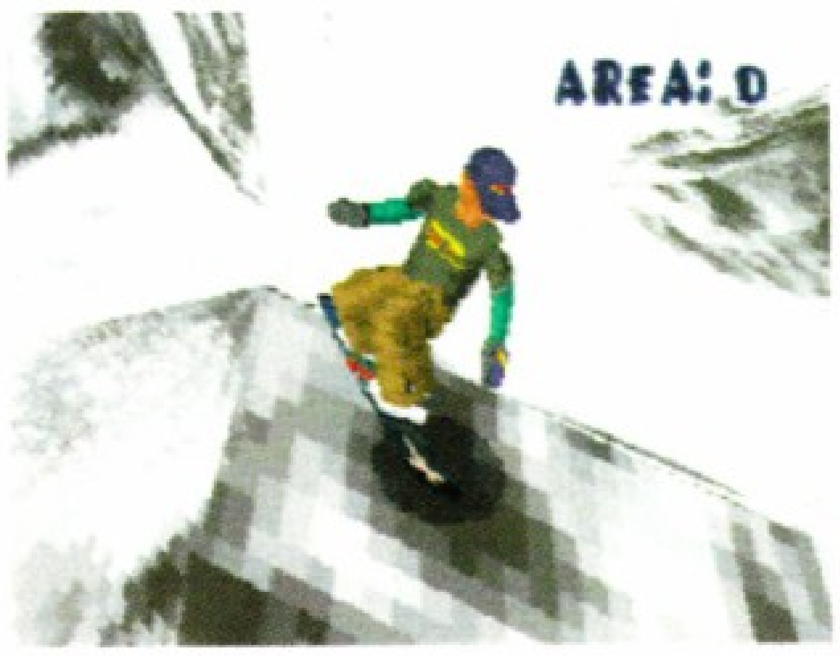
We're sending Warren off to the AOU Show in February (see page 92) where the lucky sod will be playing all the latest arcade titles he can and hopefully bringing you folks the odd SSM exclusive. As well as the titles shown in this month's coin-operated, we've just heard mutterings regarding an AM1 puzzle game and a sequel of sorts to last year's Die Hard Arcade.

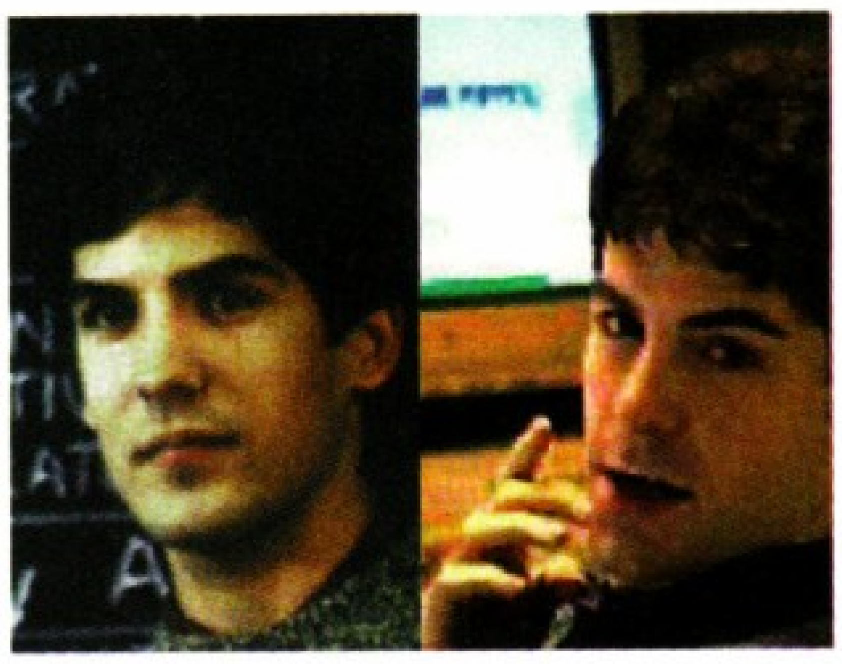
Nick News...

Ascent in Pork? (Anagram)

Just a quick mention here for our Deputy Art Editor, as young Nick Paterson has been the subject of much office gossip this month. First of all he managed to shame himself at a New Year's Eve party by drunkenly failing to recognise such celebrity musos as Graham Coxon from Blur and Louise Werner from Sleeper. Fortunately he redeemed himself at Sega's Steep Slope Sliders launch bash by walking off with £1000 worth of snowboarding gear. We'd like to report that he stole it, but the truth is that the jammy sod won it all in a spectacular display of halfpipe mastery. Git.

Far right: Can it be true? Are Nick Paterson and Albert from Little House on the Prairie really one and the same person? You decide!





HMV CHARTS

Week Ending 23 January 1998

Send us your top ten titles and win a free Saturn game! Post your choices to READER CHARTS, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, 37-39 MILL HARBOUR, ISLE OF DOGS, LONDON E14 9TZ. We give away exclusive pre-production silver CD games! This month's winner is Andy Jefferson from Colne, Lancashire.

	HMV CHARTS		READER CHARTS		SEGA PARK CHARTS
1	Steep Slope Sliders	1	Steep Slope Sliders	1	Top Skater
2	Marvel Super Heroes	2	Duke Nukem 3D	2	House of the Dead
3	FIFA '98: Road to World Cup	3	Sonic R	3	The Lost World: Jurassic Park
4	Alien Trilogy	4	SWWS '98	4	Marvel Super Heroes vs Street Fighter
5	Bust-a-Move 3	5	Fighters MegaMix	5	Street Fighter III
6	NBA Live '98	6	Resident Evil	6	Le Mans 24
7	NHL All-Star Hockey '98	7	Sega Touring Car	7	Virtua Fighter 3
8	Quake	8	Soviet Strike	8	Motor Raid
9	Lost World: Jurassic Park	9	Street Fighter Alpha 2	9	Sega Rally
10	Sonic R	10	Die Hard Trilogy	10	Mortal Kombat 4

NEWS

Japanese release dates

Zombies Invade Japan!

JUST TO KEEP YOU FOLKS UP-TO-DATE with the current state of Saturn games in Japan, we're bringing you an update of forthcoming releases. All dates are 100% confirmed, so add a few months onto 'em and you can probably guess when they'll be out over here.





VIRTUA COP DELUXE PACK + HOUSE OF THE DEAD DEMO

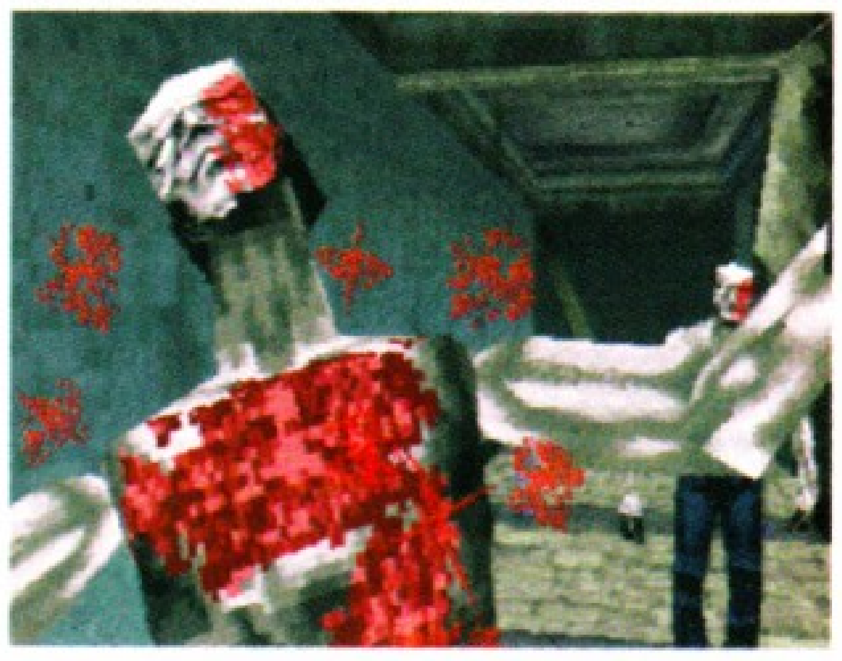
There's an extra-value Virtua Cop pack released in Japan on 23rd February, containing Cops 1 & 2, a Virtua Gun, and incredibly, a one-level playable demo version of House of the Dead! The bargain-bucket price and awesome demo should help this pack to 'shoot' up the import charts. Ho, ho.



VAMPIRE SAVIOR, D&D COLLECTION

The Japanese zombie invasion starts on 1st March, with the release of Capcom's 4MB cart-boosted Vampire Savior. The first DarkStalkers game to run with a RAM upgrade, this will definitely be one to look out for. Also released from Capcom's two-dimensional wonderworld is Dungeons & Dragons Collection. This scrolling two-games-in-one beat 'em up pack should also be arcade perfect, thanks to our new 4MB friend. Expect this one on 26th February.





BURNING RANGERS

The latest version we've seen is virtually complete, which is a good job considering the game will be in Japanese shops on 28th February. Sonic Team have delayed the release of Burning Rangers a couple of times now, and no doubt this extra coding time has allowed them to polish the 3D fire-fighting gameplay to an even higher level. When Sonic Team release a game we buy it, no questions asked.

HOUSE OF THE DEAD

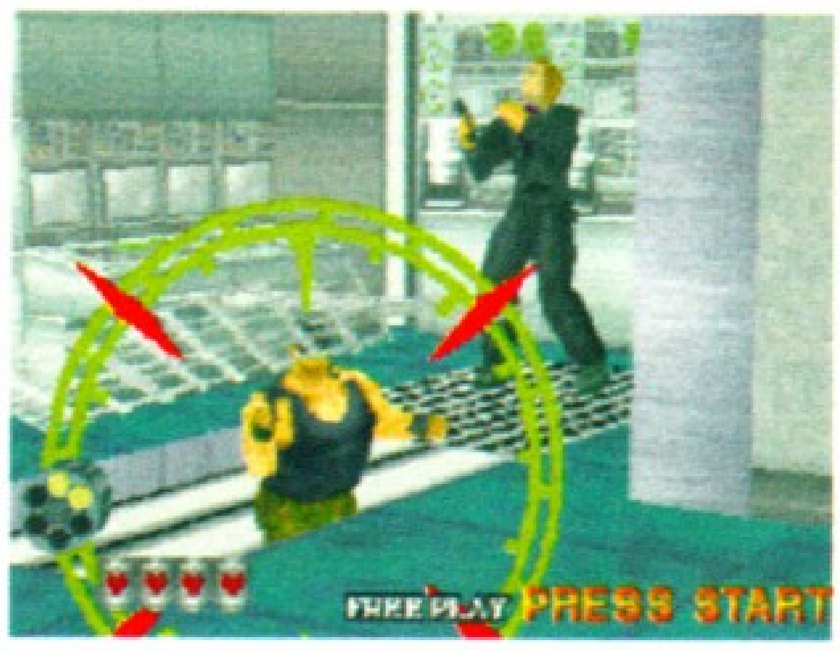
Yeah, baby! Phase two of the zombie assault on Japan will be launched on 10th March, when our 'most wanted' game of the moment, House of the Dead, is released in Japan. And with the UK release slated to happen only one month after the Japanese version, we're all 'dead' excited about it. Heh, heh.

KING OF FIGHTERS '97

Going head-to-head against Capcom's Vampire Savior, King of Fighters '97 continues SNK's legendary 2D beat 'em up series. KoF '97 will appear in Japanese stores on 26th March. There's no news on a UK release yet, but with previous KoF games going down quite well, we reckon KoF '97 has a pretty high chance of a spring/summer UK release.



If you own a converted Saturn you should be getting Burning Rangers at the end of February!



Virtua Cop is back in a deluxe three disc pack.



SNK fans rejoice! King of Fighters '97 in March!

Crap Promotional item of the Month: No.1

Warp Curry!





Unbelievable as it may be, this man is actually our Japanese Editor, Warren Harrod. Obviously he's not Japanese, but he does live in the land of the rising sun and as such is our vital link to all the latest Saturn news. Warren's workload includes travelling to visit the likes of AM2, Sonic Team and Team Andromeda, hobnobbing with Yuji Naka, translating obscure bits of Japanese text and getting those all-important 'scoops' to us in time. However, he's recently been the unfortunate recipient of mountains of useless junk sent to him by PR folk from the four corners of Japan. These promotional items range from the cool (Virtual On figures) to the bizarre as witnessed by this issue's Warp Curry extravaganza.

Always one to throw himself into his work, young Warren gave Enemy Zero creator Kenji Eno's spicy freebie the Harrod taste test and sent the accompanying photo to us. What's not shown are the pictures of Warren being admitted to hospital and having his stomach pumped. Remember kids: it may be free, but if it makes you fart - forget it!



Warren Harrod: Three years of university education and this could be you. Not interested?

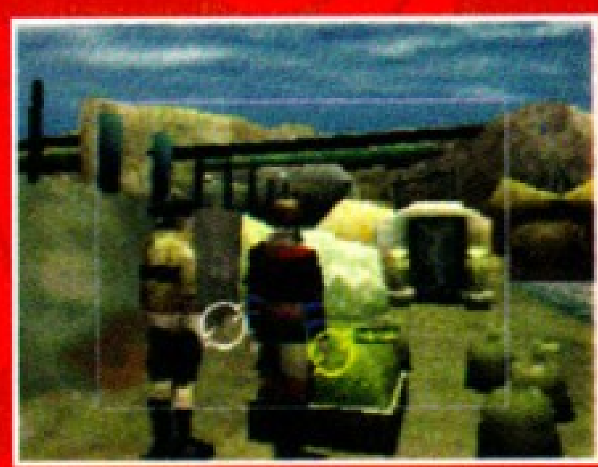


C'mon, you must remember Warp's D...



...and what about Enemy Zero? That was good!

NEXT MONTH



In the next issue of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, we'll be reviewing Panzer Dragoon Saga in its full English language glory PLUS revealing the wonders of the game's latter stages! Also expect more incredible Burning Rangers coverage and a fine continuation of the Grandia-For-English-People guide! We'll be rounding off the Quake guide, continuing the Croc walk through and providing more top tips. Plus: a special feature on the best import Saturn games that'll never come out over here! All this (and more) in the next ACTION-PACKED issue of SSM!

SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE,
APRIL 1998 ISSUE OUT MARCH 11!

Dear Newsagent ,

When you've quite finished nipping down the cinema to watch Titanic for the third time, could you please put a copy of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE aside for me. It's a top notch publication and costs less than the budget of the flippin' film. Ta!

NAME ______________________

ADDRESS ______________________


LANCIA

COMING SOON



Sega Rally 2

This month, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE presents an exclusive in-depth feature on what must rank as one of the most eagerly-awaited arcade sequels of all time - Sega Rally 2. Strap your seat belts on for the ride of a life time!

In December of last year, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE's Japanese correspondent was one of the select few to sample an early version of the long-awaited Sega Rally 2. On location test at a Tokyo amusement arcade, the basic game was in a playable form allowing users to give feedback on the game to the development team. The overwhelming response from those who played it is that Sega Rally 2 looks set eclipse the success of its predecessor!

Development on the top secret project began way back in February 1997. At the helm was the crack AM Annex development team, headed by the original Sega Rally coin-op producer, Mr Tetsuya Mizuguchi. At that point the basic game concept had been fixed, though it would still undergo various changes in the months of development to follow. Using the same Model 3 technology which powered the earlier Virtua Fighter 3, AM Annex has been afforded greater scope to produce an ultra-realistic racer. However, the team are very conscious of the fact that graphics alone won't assure Sega Rally 2's success, so are keen to get the driving sensation just right. >>



If you live in Bournemouth, you may well have seen Sega Rally 2 on test over Christmas.



During the game, unused arcade cabinets act as live monitors by showing the action from the ensuing race the other drivers are taking part in.





Bottom: Such was the popularity of the hidden Lancia Stratos in the original, that AM Annex have brought it back for Sega Rally 2.

COMING SOON





With AM 2 poised to unveil the long-awaited Daytona 2 at any time now, AM Annex are taking their time to ensure Sega Rally 2 comes out on top.





The intro is so life-like you could be tricked into believing it was real footage.

Using the same Model 3 technology which powered the incredible Virtua Fighter 3, AM Annex have more scope to produce an ultra-realistic racer.

LET'S GO BURN SOME RUBBER!

Although most of the essential gameplay elements are in evidence, AM Annex has many features to add before the game nears completion. Slated for inclusion are a total of six vehicles, though only the Toyota Corolla, Ford Escort, Subaru Impreza and Lancia Stratos are playable at this point in time. The Peugeot 306 and Mitsubishi Lancer are to be added at a later date. Although the project is only at a 40% complete stage, it is already possible to distinguish the different handling characteristics of each of the vehicles. As seasoned Sega Rally players will know, the Lancia Stratos is a two-wheel-drive vehicle, so has far more erratic handling than the more grippy four-wheel-drive Toyota Corolla.

Further improving upon the original formula, each of the vehicles in Sega Rally 2 features a greater variety of viewpoints, with a driver's eye and chase perspective being selectable at any given point during the race. In addition, AM Annex is keen to include as many secret cars as possible, though the team are restricted somewhat by a tight development schedule.



Look forward to some awesome replays of each race. Oh, yes.









Sega Rally 2 uses the same on-screen icon and voice navigation system which proved so successful with its illustrious predecessor. Awesome stuff.

BUT OF COURSE!

At present, there are four courses slated for inclusion in the finished game (bar the secret course), though only three have been revealed so far. The beginning Desert course is the simplest of the lot, featuring a wide circuit, few challenging bends and a combination of tarmac and gravel road surfaces. The intermediate Forest course is slightly tougher, beginning in a small village before heading out into the forest itself and then into the hills. The road isn't quite as wide as in the Desert course, but has more undulations in the tarmac surface. As you'd expect, the expert night time Riviera



The forest track even has falling snow effects!



The hand brake is essential for these tricky bends.



The Desert course is the simplest on the roster, but is still challenging.









AM Annex are keen to address the criticisms levelled at the original Sega Rally by including more vehicles, tracks and an interactive crowd. Cool, eh?



track is rock-solid, consisting of an all tarmac road surface, a narrow track and some incredibly tight corners. The hair pin bends in particularly will catch most players out, requiring precision use of the hand brake to negotiate successfully.

BETTER THAN THE REAL THING

As with the original Sega Rally, AM Annex is keen to convey a feeling of gritty realism with Sega Rally 2, making you think you're driving a rally car without actually having to know how to drive one to play the game. So right from the start, AM Annex has been working closely with cabinet designers AM4 to create a realistic and convincing experience. The steering for example, reacts in a life-like manner to the different road surfaces by accurately feeding back the condition of the road into the handling of the steering



The Riviera course reminds us a little of Scud Race, only more impressive.



AM Annex want to get the driving experience as close to perfection as possible, so may well delay the title if the balance isn't quite right.

wheel. And the newly designed seat unit actively reproduces all the bumps and crashes of your car and even rocks from side to side.



The mud-slinging effects are now far more impressive.

THEM'S THE (HAND) BRAKES

The two AM divisions have also been closely considering the feasibility of introducing a hand brake. They realise that this is an integral element of real-life rallying and would certainly go down well with arcade punters. So after experimenting with test versions to determine how well it fits into the game, AM Annex decided it works rather well and are retaining it for the finished version of the game. Situated on the right-hand side of the arcade cabinet, players will find it essential for executing precision power-slides.

Although AM Annex would certainly like to release Sega Rally 2 in the spring, they're well aware that recent arcade racers haven't enjoyed much commercial success. This is largely as a result of developers concentrating on the visuals whilst neglecting the all-important gameplay. Not so with Sega Rally 2. AM Annex wants to get the driving experience as close to perfection as possible, so may well delay the title if they feel the balance isn't quite right.

COMING TO THE UK

Sega Rally 2 is strongly rumoured to be putting in an appearance at January's ATE International show at Earls Court, London. Of course, the entire SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE posse will be there to put the game through its paces (and to quaff as much free beer as is humanly possible). So expect further details on this earth-shattering title in the next issue of SSM.





Sega Rally 2 is scheduled to debut at February's AOU Show, so we'll have plenty more coverage next issue!



House of the Dead

With AM1 overseeing development and Tantalus handling the programming chores, House of the Dead is shaping up to be a classic Saturn title. With preview disc and lightgun in hand, MATT YEO takes on the armies of darkness.



The latest version of House of the Dead boasts new monsters, extra levels and green, gushing gore!

It's been two long months since we had our first whiff of House of the Dead and in that short time developer Tantalus have been a busy bunch indeed. In issue #27 we took our first look at one of the most anticipated arcade-to-home conversions and were literally blown away by the potential quality of Sega's forthcoming Spring '98 smash. Although many of you were shocked to learn that the Saturn version of House of the Dead would be coded by the folks responsible for WipEout 2097 and Manx TT, those first few screenshots should have been enough to calm your fears. We were suitably impressed and you will be too. This month we took delivery of an updated disc which hints at even greater things to come.

For starters, the first stage is practically complete. There's still work to be done in some areas, but all the action sequences are now in as are the familiar arcade cut scenes. Likewise, the number of lives, bullets and the "Reload!" prompt have been added. Also making a welcome appearance is the essential two player mode. The last time we looked at House of the Dead, the game was strictly a one player lightgun only affair. This time around, the game supports two intrepid agents armed with either Virtua Guns or joypads. The latter option represented by either a red or blue crosshair onscreen depending on which player you've selected. Basic polygon models have now been fully texture mapped and Tantalus deserve much praise for producing such an accurate coin-op conversion. Obviously it was always going to be impossible to produce a totally accurate Saturn version of AM1's awesome shoot 'em up, but these antipodean aces have virtually succeeded. From huge hulking creatures that move with incredible speed for their size to some genuinely scary moments, Saturn House of the Dead has it all.

Kicking off 'The First Chapter: Tragedy' is a cool cut scene showing agents Tom Rowgun and G arriving at the mysterious mansion of Dr Curien. They screech to a halt in their custom coupe before leaping into action against a legion of zombies. After saving the life of a hapless scientist, the two heroes begin their mission proper, fac-















As Tantalus deliver new versions of House of the Dead, the gore quota is increased making this Saturn conversion even more arcade perfect!

ing the wrath of the mad Doc's weird and wonderful creations. While our first preview copy of House of the Dead lacked even some of the more basic creatures, this version has the lot. Shambling undead abominations lurch toward the screen with frightening realism only to be stopped in their tracks by a hail of gunfire. Bullets rip through decaying flesh, revealing bones, blood and brains. Be warned: this isn't for the feint of heart!

LEVEL-HEADED, LUV!

Tantalus now have the majority of the first level complete with fully textured zombies and mutated monsters inhabiting every corner of the mansion's courtyard. There are shuffling zombies in the distance, providing perfect target practice for crack shots, while close range attacks allow players to see just how much detail is being squeezed into the game. Additional monsters arrive in all shapes and forms from the giant bat-like menace of The Hangedman and his flapping vampire minions to the knife-wielding Drakes and sledgehammer-swinging Gilmores. None of these fiends were covered in our last House of the Dead feature, but are seen here for the first time looking every bit as impressive as their arcade counterparts. However, our real favourite addition this month has to be the appearance of the chainsaw-slashing Samsons. These slack-jawed yokels (possibly inspired by Lee Nutter) lurch out of the woodwork attempting to hack you to pieces. As the largest zombies in the game, the Samsons take plenty of punishment requiring two head shots to finish 'em off. Blast away at their flabby torsos and they simply laugh at you. What's more, their presence is suddenly announced by the eerie whine of their razor-sharp chainsaws. Brrr... scary!



With the courtyard in place, players now have the chance to explore the mansion's sewer system and a number of room and corridors. Blasting their way through the >>





New features include on-screen displays and such coin-op creatures as the chainsaw-wielding Samsons.

"There's no doubt in our minds that Tantalus will perform miracles with AM1's coin-op classic!"







The killer frogs are in and are every bit as spooky as their arcade counterparts.



The on-screen numbers indicate where items, such as barrels, frogs and icons, will be added later.





The cut scenes are now present and correct and look... here's what Dean Mortlock's doing these days!



>> building's hallways and landings, Tom and G encounter new creatures as well as more helpless scientists. As before, the stage concludes with a battle against the game's first boss - the armoured Chariot. This time though, old tin trousers has been given a texture mapped lick of paint, with missing polygons now in place, giving him a more solid feel. Also worth a mention here is Sophie, Tom's long-suffering girlfriend and they only foxy bit of flesh in the game. She's whisked away before any amour occurs and players next encounter her shapely form at the end of stage 2.

And talking of which... Yep, the second chapter of House of the Dead is well underway with players tackling the mansion's upper levels and rooftop horrors. Of note here are some awesome long distance views of the gardens surrounding the Gothic building complete with tiny zombies in the background. And yes... you can shoot them even from far away. Although nowhere as complete as the first stage, this section of the game is roughly as finished as the first chapter was when we last looked at it. Some creatures are in, but numerous texture maps are still to be added as is the Hangedman boss. However, what is clear is that this guardian encounter shows how fast and smooth this battle will be. Players begin by blasting away at the many bats surrounding this winged weirdo before taking on the main man himself. This creature swoops and darts around the screen, the camera constantly trying to follow its movements as players attempt to reign fire down on its leathery hide. Even after being knocked off the rooftop, players hang onto gutter-







You'll need spot-on shooting skills and lightning-like reflexes if you hope to survive The House of the Dead.













The armoured Chariot gets his butt well and truly whupped! Aim for his chest weak spot then go for his wussy pink body. This guy's a pushover.









This sequence shows just how accurate the Saturn conversion is. Players blast zombie limbs, blow holes in their chests and then finish 'em with a head shot!



ing with one hand while still blasting at their foe from below. Amazing stuff and guaranteed to look superb in the finished game.

I'm running out of space here, but there's some much more I have to mention. For instance. This version of House of the Dead now boasts green blood (an option allows players to change the colour of all the gore), spot-on lightgun response, English speech and many of the sound effects sampled directly from the arcade original. There's plenty to look forward to in the next update and Sega have promised us a virtually complete game next month. We can't wait!

THE TRACKS OF YOUR FEARS

There's no danger of players becoming bored with House of the Dead. With spine-chilling suspense, superbly animated characters and some heart-stopping moments, this is one lightgun game that just begs to played time and again. What's more, Tantalus have also incorporated AM1's cool multiple route system, a feature that made this horrorfest such an arcade hit. At certain points in the game, a players' actions determine which path they will take through the spooky mansion. Save scientists and innocent civilians and you're rewarded with computer keycards or extra lives which trigger an alternative series of events. Less talented players will still face a monstrous challenge, but skilled agents will discover all manner of secret routes and alternate paths through the house of horrors.

This also means that even when you complete the game, there are are always other sections to see and creatures to encounter.

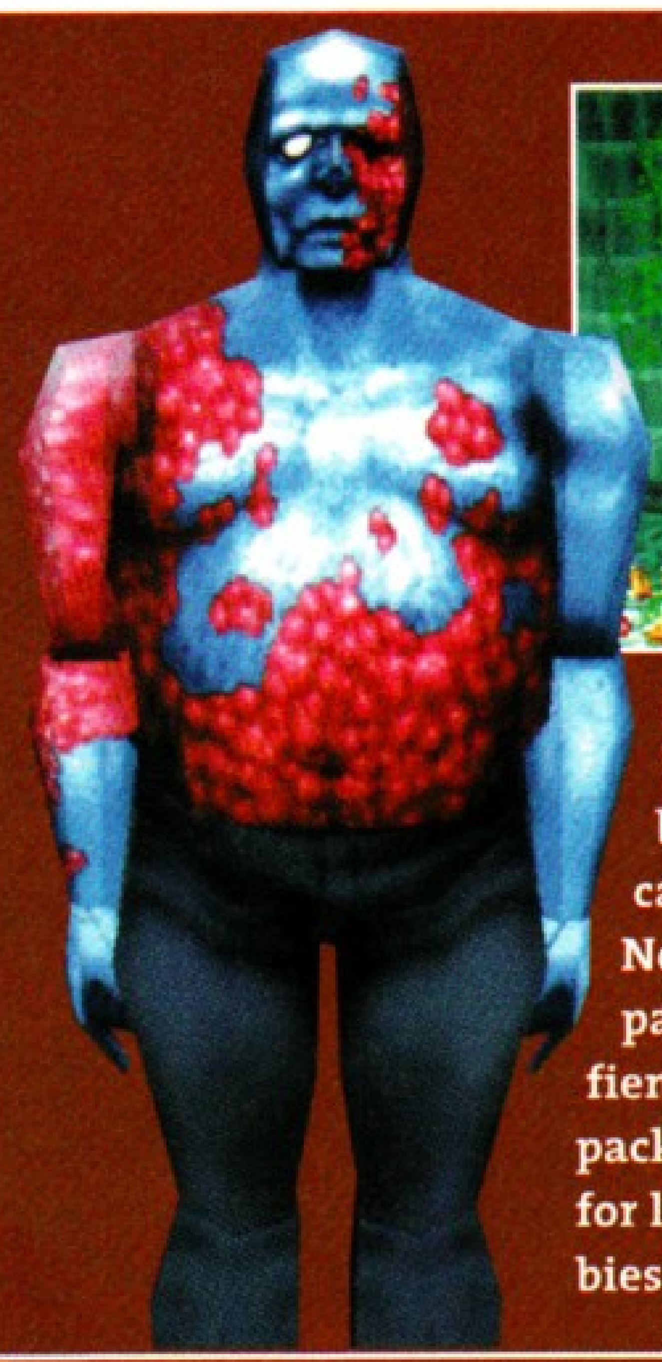






Thanks to a cool multiple route system, House of the Dead will never lose its appeal. Players will come back again and again to discover even more secrets.

SAM





Fat, gross and blue. Sams lurk behind pillars and doors before lurching forward to catch naive players by surprise. Not as tough as their chainsaw-packing Samson cousins, these fiends tend to hang around in packs, usually acting as support for larger groups of standard zombies. Blast 'em to bits!

DRAKE





Small, mean and deadly. Dressed in drab business suits and armed to the teeth with lethal knives, the Drakes always attack in pairs, usually by plummeting from the roof or through skylights. They leap in with a vicious slash before retreating to a distance and using their throwing blades with pinpoint accuracy.

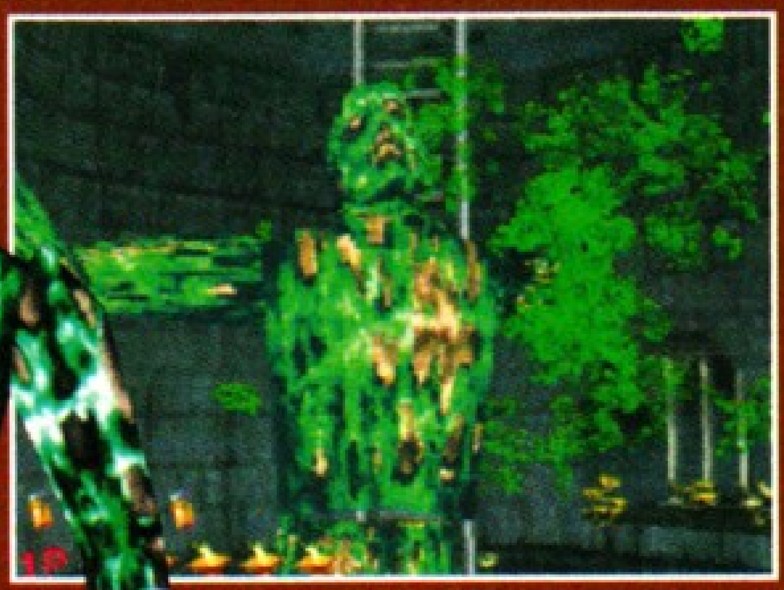




Don't forget to save scientists from a grisly demise. Players gain extra lives and vital computer keycards.

BLUBON





Found in or near sewers, the Blubons emerge from their watery lairs with a close range assault that hits hard and fast. Although it's not impossible to avoid their initial attack, players usually suffer at least one blow before sending these slippery scum back to Hell!

NEIL





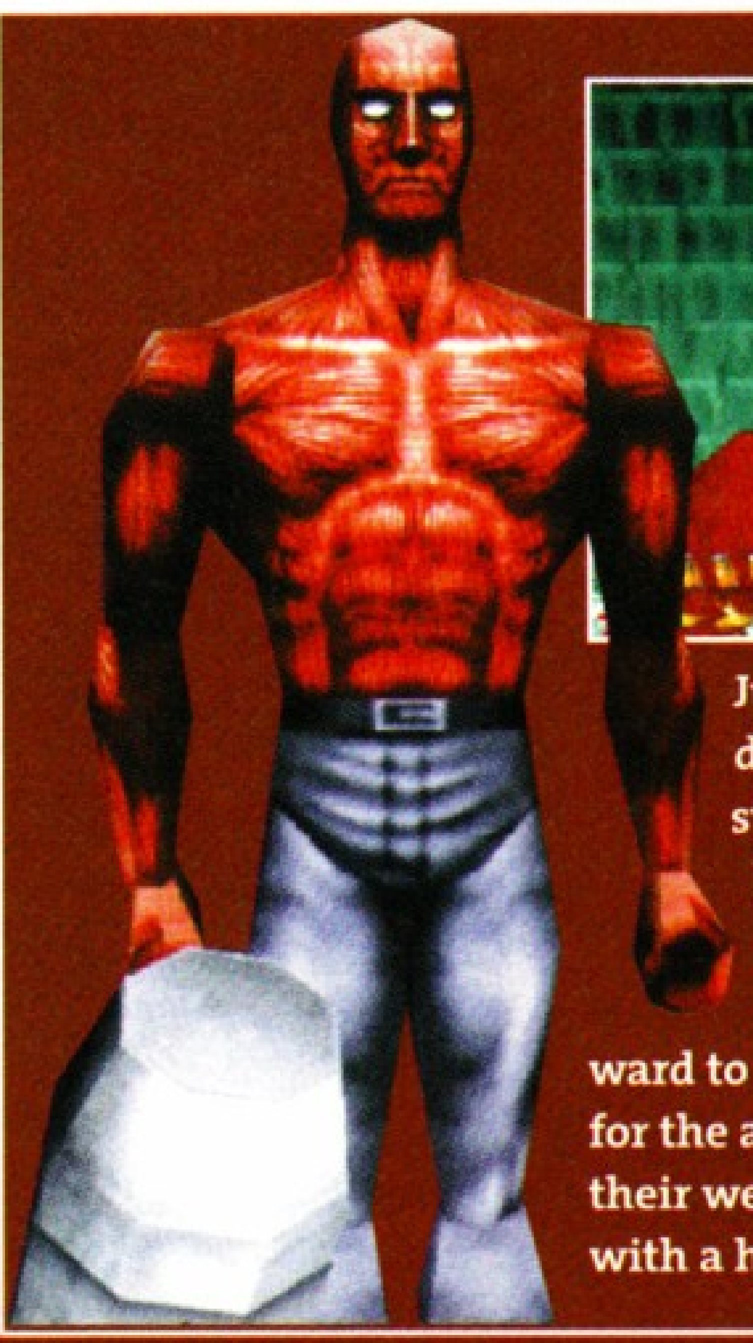
The Arnie Schwarzenegger of zombies, Neils are all brawn and no brain. They have two methods of attack, both of which are capable of causing plenty of damage. The first is a hard-hitting shoulder charge, guaranteed to send players reeling. The second involves wooden barrels being launched from above.





Here's the secret laboratory from Stage 2. Shoot switches and panels to locate alternative routes.

GILMORE





Just added to our preview disc, the Gilmores use huge stone mallets to swipe at our heroes. They have a tendency to hang back during a fight before shambling forward to have a pop at players. Aim for the arms to make them lose their weapons then finish 'em off with a head shot.

SAMSON





Another addition to House of the Dead, the Samsons are killer country bumpkins armed with gasoline-powered chainsaws. Again, the key to defeating them involves blasting their arms off before picking the rest of their off at your leisure. We like 'em because they're perfect cannon fodder!





Stage 2 also features the mansion's rooftop level and zombie-infested bell tower. The undead are everywhere!

PREVIEW

BY	SPIKE	
RELEASE	OUT NOW	PLAYERS
HARDWARE	PRICE: IMPORT	1
N/A	STYLE: DJ SIM	

If Tony Blackburn is your idea of a top DJ, read no further - this is a mad Japanese club DJ simulation. Is it some kind of sick joke, or one of the coolest games we've ever seen?

DJ Wars



▲ Apparently, all people in Japan dress like this.





▲ (Left) Check out the Top 20 in each club to make sure you play the tracks that the crowds really love.

It seems like everybody in the EMAP building moonlights as a professional DJ, as phrases like "The fader's a bit unresponsive" and "Of course, it's much easier in real life" were heard for days after DJ Wars arrived in the office. This ultra-cool Japanese DJ game has certainly got us all going for it in a seriously 'large' fashion, what with its groovy polygon DJs, the ace selection of music to muck about with and a whole bunch of cool samples and noises to play with.

Just like it is for real DJs, practising in your bedroom is an important part of the learning process. The practise mode is, obviously, the best place to start in DJ Wars, and these private sessions are really important for two reasons - getting to know your record collection and of course, learning how to manipulate your equipment.

Once you've grown bored of playing to the psychedelic wallpaper in your bedroom, it's time to start playing the thing properly. The idea behind the game is to play in trendy nightclubs, whipping the crowd into a frenzy as you go, before moving on to the next club and playing another blinder to the adoring crowd. Simple. But remember, only a fool would attempt to mix a 'dope' Hip-Hop tune with a 'banging' Techno classic, so practise those mixes!

The selection of music is huge (50 tracks in total) and most of the tunes are great too. Even better, all of the music is being played by the Saturn's humble sound chip, which is really being pushed to the limit by the cool tracks with names like Evolution, Future TR, Bad Boy and the breakbeat classic, Poo Trip. That last one probably sounds better in Japanese. Anyway, most of the records are only just over a minute long, so the momentum and speed of the game doesn't drop, and it's a constant battle to keep the music flowing and the crowd happy.

There are loads of special effects too - sirens and vocal samples can be used to spice up your mix, and more adventurous jocks can try their hand at a bit of scratching. But be careful - some clubs aren't too keen on these fancy moves, so you'll need to tailor your style of play and record selection to each club. A double-press of a Top button on the Saturn's pad will instantly cut from one deck to the other, while more accomplished DJs can adjust the pitch, volume and effects before casually sliding in the next 'large' tune to a rapturous crowd response. It seems a bit hit-and-miss sometimes - what you think was a blinding mix is given a 'Bad' rating by the game, while random fading and scratching often

DJ PHRASEBOOK

DJ Wars is definitely a 'large' game. I'm not saying it's physically bigger in size than other games, I'm just trying to talk like a DJ. Now you too can fool your friends into thinking you've become a super-cool DJ, by casually slipping some of the following words and phrases into your everyday conversations. We've translated them as well, for those of you less well acquainted with DJ culture:

Decks: Record players
Tunes: Records
Dope Track: Particularly fine record
Full-on: Committed to the task
Havin' it: Enjoying yourself
Banging: High volume
Playing a blinder: Performing well
Mad Skills: Good DJing abilities
Safe: Good
Large: Very good

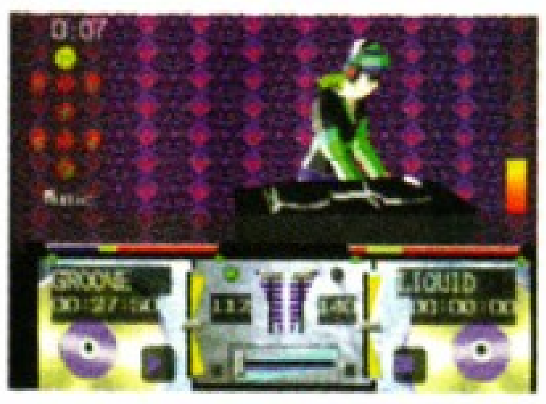
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▲ If you ever find yourself in the need to 'look cool' quickly in an emergency situation, impress friends and members of the opposite sex by striking one of these four super-cool DJ poses. And with these great light-sourced polygon DJs the whole game looks cool too.







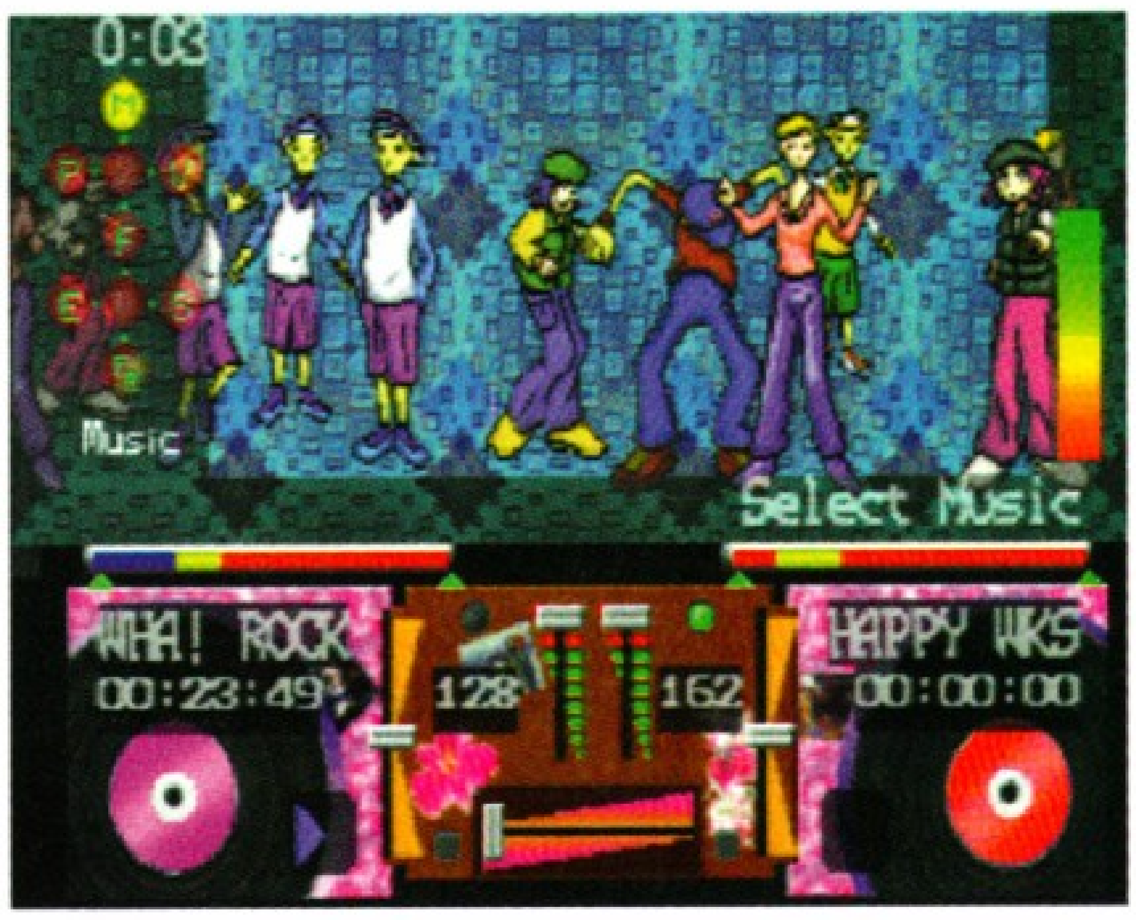


▲ "That's the way (uh-huh, uh-huh) I like it (uh-huh, uh-huh)... Come on everybody, sing along!"



WE'RE HAVIN' IT LARGE!

Getting some decent crowd response is the most important part of the game. See that gauge to the right of the screen? That measures how happy the crowd is with your music - let the meter fall to zero and you'll be thrown out of the club. Keep it at a high level to activate the club's cool lights and make the groovy cartoon crowd dance even more! Pay special attention to the guide that comes up beforehand, as it tells you what style of music each particular crowd prefers...



results an a 'Cool' rating and a cheer from the crowd.

The Japanese options don't get in the way too much (UK release chances: zero) and with the special effects, faders, pitch controls and all the other technical stuff to worry about, players need to take a while to figure out the controls before 'playing a blinder' at one of the nine clubs in the game. Don't worry if you fancy bagging an import copy - the on-screen buttons are all in English and most of the rest is pretty self-explanatory too, with only the story and introductions in Japanese.

If you're into the whole scene, DJ Wars is probably the most enjoyable game you'll play this year - but only for a few days though, as once the novelty starts to wear off it gets dull very quickly. Still, DJ Wars is definitely one of those 'party games' you'll get out to impress people with, after all, games are supposed to be fun, right?





▲ Uh-oh, bad DJ skills will get you chucked out.

[Mental Japanese DJ action that is bloody good fun. We've been Havin' it in the office!]

Top five weird DJ Wars track names:
1. Ugh Baby
2. Boys Turn
3. Frog Beat
4. Poo Trip
5. Wha! Rock!





▲ "Yeah man, we're havin' it large with some full-on, safe, banging tunes." That's exactly how all DJs talk. Really.





BY	PONY CANYON
RELEASE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	2
HARDWARE	
PRICE	IMPORT
STYLE	SNOWBOARDING

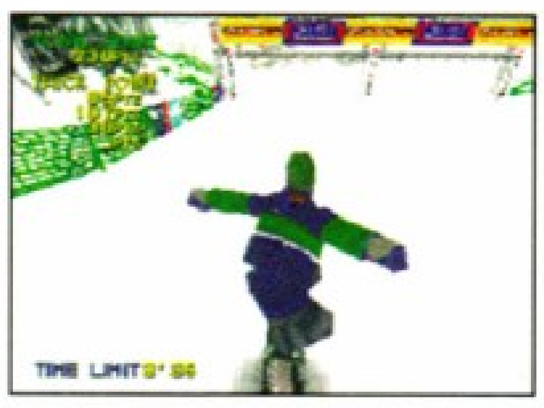
Pony Canyon - the most stupid name ever for a coding team. But they obviously know their cookies as Zap! Snowboarding Trix was a pretty decent snowboarding game. Now there's a sequel...

Zap! '98 Snowboarding Trix



▲ There are some very cool backgrounds in Zap! '98.





▲ The replay has some great close-up camera work.

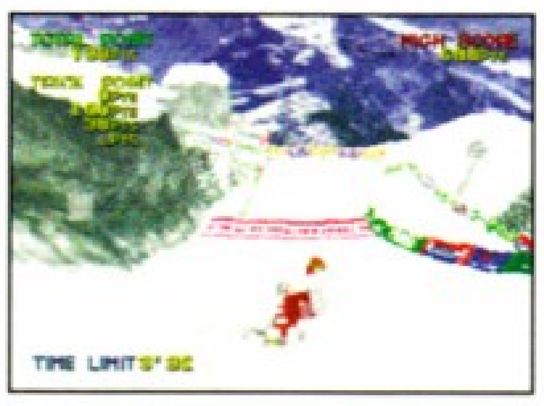


▲ Zap! '98's very playable two-player mode! Bet you don't feel so cocky now, do you Mr Steep Slope Sliders?

Here's a great way to embarrass your fashionable snowboarding mates - ask them if they've ever been on a bloody snowboard. Go on, ask them. I'll wager a large chunk of my EMAP salary that they haven't, and base their love of snowboarding simply on the fact that it looks 'cool' on TV and allows them to wear ridiculous trousers that, frankly, most normal people would be ashamed to wear in public. But one good thing has come out of this snowboarding obsession - Steep Slope Sliders. Sega designed their game to be bigger, better, faster and cooler than the first Zap! game, with more characters, more tracks and way better graphics. Steep Slope is cool.



Now the Japanese snowboard freaks at Pony Canyon have decided to upgrade their first Zap! game with this '98 version, and guess what? They've included more characters, more tracks and better graphics. Well you would, wouldn't you? Zap! '98 takes a more realistic approach than Steep Slope Sliders though, with longer and more technically demanding courses and a much tougher stunt system. Instead of spinning 1080 degrees and pulling-off some incredible stunts every time the board rises a few inches above the snow (Steep Slope Sliders), Zap! '98 makes players work very hard to earn their trick points.





The big selling-point of Zap '98 is the two-player mode. And it works pretty well. Opting for a vertical side-by-side view was a good decision too, as it's quite a bit easier to see down the course to the up-coming corners and obstacles. There's no noticeable difference in the graphics either, with tracks and detail levels looking pretty much exactly the same as they do in the one-player mode. The only problem here is the old 'chestnut' that many two-player racing games suffer from - only two players are on the course at the same time, so if one of the players races into a huge lead it becomes a pretty

> [The two-player mode **is cool**, but the gameplay isn't quite up to **Steep Slope Sliders'** level]

FREESTYLE MODE

The 1987 Videogame Publications Act states that any magazine article referring to a Snowboarding game must use the phrase 'mad air' at least once in the course of the feature. Thankfully for us, Zap '98 contains a special 'Freestyle' mode, designed specifically for giving players a chance to mess around as much as they like, so we can indeed state with confidence that some seriously 'mad air' can be grabbed in the game. The Straight Jump (1) and Half Pipe (2) areas are the best for performing tricks. Extra points are scored by landing on your feet instead of your arse...

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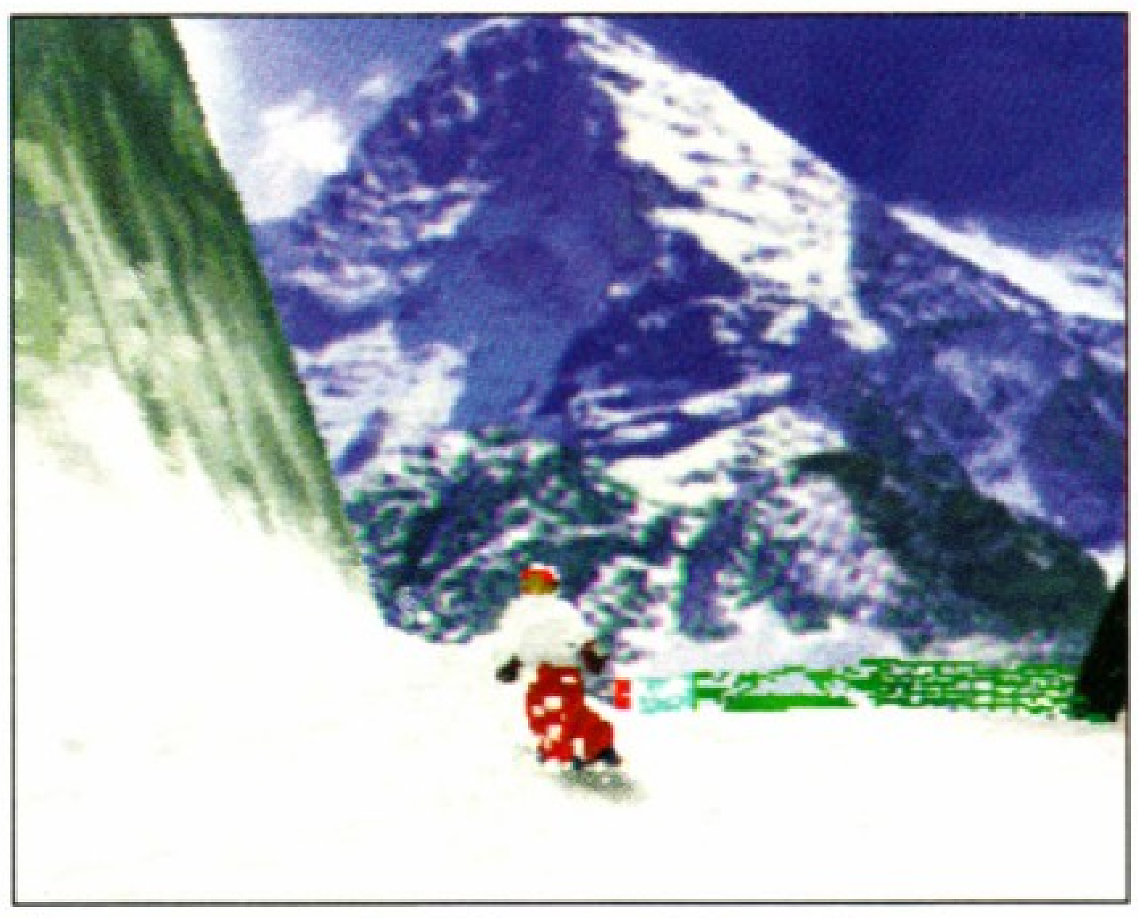
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◀ Points are dished-out for finishing races in Championship mode, and these are used to boost the speed, cornering, recovery, power and technical skills of your racer. As usual, fast racers are worse at tricks than slower boarders, so these points allow players to build their very own super-skilled ultra-boarder.





▲ The courses in Zap! '98 are much longer than the ones in Steep Slope, which makes the game quite a bit tougher...





▲ ...but there aren't as many tracks to race on.

CHAMPIONSHIP MODE

This is a great idea. Pick a boarder, then compete against five other racers over every course in the game, scoring points for finishing quickly on the speed tracks, performing cool stunts on the trick tracks and beating opponents in the one-on-one slalom. Actually racing against other boarders is a cool idea that Steep Slope Sliders lacked, and probably the best feature in Zap! '98, as the addition of an extra race challenge really helps boost the game's replay appeal. Shame the other racers don't appear in the two-player versus mode.





▲ Nick (our designer), won tons of boarding gear in a Steep Slope competition. I came fourth. Life's not fair.

solitary experience. Especially with Zap! '98's huge extra-long courses. Hardly exciting, but if both players are equally rubbish it should be good for a laugh.

The five initial characters and the eight tracks all look pretty good. The graphics are probably a bit more ambitious than Steep Slope Sliders' to be honest - races run through towns and around some really twisty mountain courses, with some very impressive jumps and sheer drops giving the courses some character. But there's a price to pay for these packed landscapes - Zap! '98 just isn't as smooth as Steep Slope and the surface of the course has a fairly rough-looking angular finish to it.



And it plays in pretty much the same way as Steep Slope too - use the D-pad for easy turns, hit the top buttons for more severe moves and use combinations of buttons to perform those groovy stunt moves. Only it's a lot harder than it seems. Pulling off tricks is way harder than it is in Steep Slope, with players needing to crouch on the board before take-off, and even then only one or two moves can be performed during each jump. More realistic I suppose, just not quite as much fun as Steep Slope Sliders.

It's these little things in life that make such a difference, and it's the little things that will probably stop Zap! '98 from being as cool as Steep Slope Sliders - the graphics don't seem quite as smooth or impressive, the tricks are much harder to perform and the game just doesn't have the impressive speed and style that Sega's boarding title has. It's actually quite fun to play, it's just that Steep Slope Sliders is better, that's all. If you've already bought yourself a copy of Steep Slope Sliders, you probably made the right decision.



▲ Actually, the more I played Zap! '98, the more I liked it. But it's still not quite up to Steep Slope standards







▲ The racers have different skills, abilities and trousers.







BY	SEGA	
RELEASE	OUT NOW	PLAYERS
HARDWARE	PRICE: IMPORT	1
	STYLE: RPG	

So the bad news is that Grandia won't be released in the UK, but the good news is that Shining Force 3 will. Not an ideal situation by any means, but with an RPG of this magnitude who's complaining?

Shining Force 3





▲ Be seated my children... for the adventure of a lifetime! Part One of the Shining Force 3 trilogy is superb.





▲ Dodgy old men with beards should be avoided in real life, but in this fantasy RPG world they're a vital asset.



▲ Players encounter hundreds of supporting characters.

Last issue's Shining Force 3 coverage was produced under less-than ideal conditions. Christmas holidays were approaching, our import copy arrived at the last minute and even late night sword and sorcery sessions could only begin to scrape the surface of Camelot's awesome RPG. As the first of a proposed trilogy of interlinked titles, Shining Force 3 deserves the attention of all Saturn owners. Here at SSM, the Shining series of games are well-respected and given the coverage they deserve. The phenomenal Shining the Holy Ark may have set new standards for RPG excellence on the Saturn, but Shining Force 3 takes the whole experience to yet another level.

With the Japanese version of Shining Force 3 in the shops before Christmas, Sega are promising the second installment sometime in the spring and the third is due winter '98. Of course this means that translated PAL versions will take their time coming, but Sega Europe are keen to release the first game over here early in the summer. Last month we mentioned that Camelot were employing what's known as the 'Syncronicity System' to link all three chapters in the Shining Force 3 saga. This means that the movements and actions that players perform will affect the story and outcome of subsequent games. It's entirely possible to complete the trilogy no matter which route you choose, but the adventure doesn't end with the Scenario One disc. This means that you're required to keep save data positions on your Saturn until the second and third chapters are released yet each disc may be played on its own as a separate experience.

In this first disc, players take on the role of Shinbios, a brave swordsman of the mighty Republic as he and his party battle against the evil Destonia Empire. The second installment is set to focus on an Imperial character, Medion, who discovers the existence of a sinister Bulzam cult who are involved in the politics of the war between the two great nations. Finally, Scenario Three takes a peek at the life of young Julian, who starts disc one as a member of Shinbios' army, but decides to head out on his own adventure only to discover the shocking truth behind both the war and the cult. Epic stuff indeed and it's this grand scale that has obviously spurred Sega Europe into releasing Camelot's saga in the UK.

Scenario One begins as Shinbios heeds the call of King Benetoleim and begins to gather his forces for the forthcoming battle. However, the king is kidnapped by

SPELL'S LIKE TEAM SPIRIT

Combat in the Shining Force 3 universe is simplicity itself. The game utilises a grid system allowing players to perfectly position themselves before battle commences and each character has their own tactically advantageous position. For instance, archers should be placed further away from enemies for maximum effect while cavalry units are basically your grunts and need to take on opponents at close range. Standard weapon-based attacks are supplemented by a range of devastating spells as well as health-enhancing restore magics.





▲ Once unleashed, the game's magical spells are viewed via these awesome high-res sequences. They're stunning!



▲ Players begin their travels in the walled city of Saraband. Their mission will take them across four continents on a date with destiny. Betcha can hardly wait, eh?







▲ Even the game's intro sequence is amazing.



Destonian agents and our heroes leap into the fray. Combat is easily the most enjoyable aspect of Shining Force 3 as Camelot have forgone the simple sprite-based battles of past games and instead gone for full-on Final Fantasy VII-style cut sequences. Delivered in solid high-res 3D, these battles sections are simply stunning. Watch as Danta-Les charges forward before delivering a powerful lance blow or keep you eyes on Maskyurin as he takes careful aim with his bow then lets rip with a volley of arrows. However, while standard attacks are amazing enough, it's the game's many magic spells that are guaranteed to impress onlookers. From fireballs and god-like shafts of light from Heaven to simple healing spells and cure magics, these sorcerous specials dazzle players with an onslaught of graphical effects.

During their travels, your party encounters all manner of bizarre creatures, strange worlds and shocking events. Many of the characters who cross your path end up joining your party, adding new skills and abilities to your group while at the same time revealing more of the game's engrossing plot. Of vital importance is the introduction of the Blacksmiths (you'll remember these guys from Shining the Holy Ark) who not only mend battered weapons and armour, but also use fabled Mythril to imbue your equipment with special properties. However, if you mistakenly use Dark Matter Mythril, your character may just suffer a slight personality change...

We're only halfway through our first SF 3 adventure, but there's no denying its instant appeal. We'll bring you more Shining Force 3 coverage as our quest continues!

[As the first in a trilogy of titles, Shining Force 3 deserves the attention of all Saturn owners!]

CAST OF CHARACTERS



Sinbios
Species: Human, Class: Swordsman
The game's main character and son of the Republic's Comrado. He is primarily a swordsman, but can also use a little magic.



Danta-Les
Species: Centauraus, Class: Cavalier
Plays battles by the book. He's also a cavalier in Shinbios' Republic army. He uses a lance and has great mobility.



Maskyurin
Species: Elf, Class: Magician
Specialist in attack magic, but is weak to physical assaults. She's an inquisitive young elf and this often gets her into trouble.



Grace
Species: Kyantaur, Class: Mage
A mage who believes in the god, Elbesem. Specialist in restore and revive magic, she is essential to the other team members.



Heyward
Species: Elf, Class: Archer
A specialist at long distance attacks. He catches people running away from Saraband. Joins the party early on.



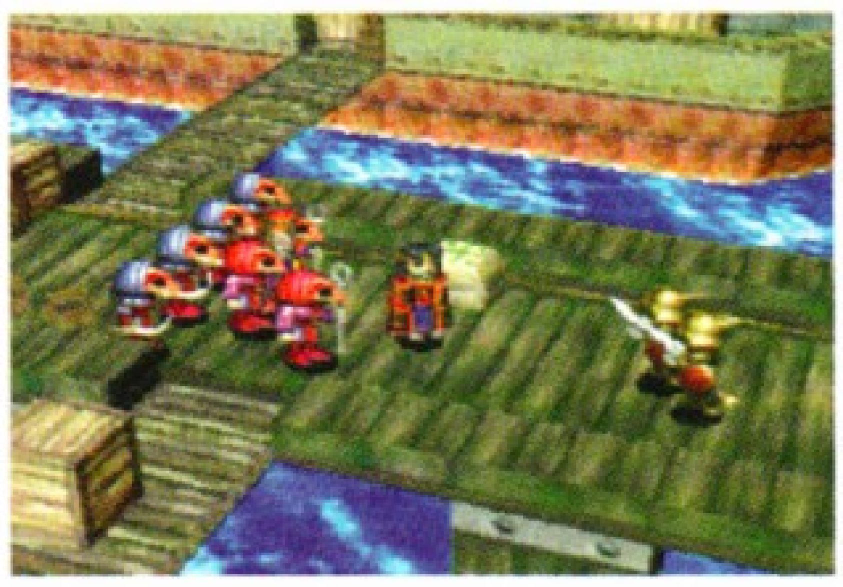
Benetoleim
Species: Human, Class: Military teacher
He is the king of the Republic and acts as the military advisor to Shinbios' armed forces. Wise and fair.

Top five unoriginal titles for games in the Shining Force series:

1. Shining Force
2. Shining in the Darkness
3. Shining Wisdom
4. Shining the Holy Ark
5. Er... The Shining (wasn't Jack Nicholson scary?)















▲ Upgrade and equip characters for tougher battles then let rip with powerful spells.

BY	SNK	
RELEASE	OUT NOW	PLAYERS
HARDWARE	PRICE: IMPORT	
	STYLE: 2D FIGHTING	

SNK's loyal band of 2D beat 'em up fans ready themselves for another bout of side-on 2D battling. But can this latest Fatal Fury release add anything to the masses of Saturn fighting games already available?

Real Bout Fatal Fury Special



▲ Now this is what I call a super-attack! Coolio!





▲ Fatal Fury remains one of the most technical fighting games you can get your hands on.



▲ Kim's a bit of a girl's name really, isn't it?

SNK's penchant for 2D fighting games is legendary - the vast majority of their output pits beautifully crafted sprites against each other in a one-on-one fighting scenario. The company makes plenty of money making such games and there's a loyal following for their output (go to any arcade in Soho and there always seems to be a bunch of chinese kids playing King of Fighters - I'm, not making that up).

But perhaps Real Bout Fatal Fury Special is a game too far. The 2D fighting genre has moved on and SNK are having trouble keeping up with the pace.

Their first Saturn title: King of Fighters 95 was excellent in that it brought all of the action of the arcade version home.. And it was better than the Neo Geo CD version too, thanks to the inclusion of a ROM cart that kept loading to a minimum. This was subsequently replaced with a RAM cart which kept prices low (you could use the same cart on multiple titles) but kept the arcade perfect pedigree.





▲ Whumph! Yeaaarghhh!

Real Bout Fatal Fury Special has all of the playability of the coin-op, but it's problem is that it is no longer arcade perfect. The graphics look a tad weedy compared to the arcade version and the sound effects are of a very low quality... but the biggest tragedy of all is that the technology exists to keep the Saturn versions of these games up to scratch.

We're talking about compatibility with the new 4MB RAM cart. Capcom have shown to devastating effect that the Saturn can handle the most taxing 2D games with apparent ease. X-Men vs Street Fighter is the closest arcade conversion you'll ever see (it's even closer than the home version of Tekken on the PlayStation - and that runs on PlayStation hardware in the arcade!). That being the case it's a bit disappointing to see SNK passing up the new technology.

We can only hope that the firm have the balls to made the forthcoming conversion of King of Fighters

[Yes indeed! The Bogard Brothers are back! Fatal Fury's deadlier than ever!]

EX-ECUTED!

As well as new characters, Real Bout Fatal Fury also features "shadow" (read: evil) versions of its most prolific fighters. Capcom did exactly the same thing in their latest effort Marvel Super Heroes vs Street Fighter, but the difference here is that the evil versions of the characters (including Andy Bogard, Blue Mary and Billy Kane) have been redrawn as opposed to just having darker costumes as in the Capcom effort. In addition to the new looks, each fighter also has slightly altered techniques too.







NEW BLOOD

New Fatal Fury? New characters! Three fighting geniuses meet the established Fatal Fury crowd, each with a claim to the title as the most powerful fighter in the world!

1. WOLFGANG KRAUSER

A german with delusions of grandeur. He thinks he's the best fighter in the world. He considers his fighting style to be art! And now he wants to prove all of this to the masses in the Fatal Fury Arena!

2. LAURENCE BLOOD

A spaniard called Laurence Blood eh? Maybe he isn't completely stereotyped in terms of his name, but when it comes to profession, guess what? He's a matador! Once revered in Spain, now he's little more than a henchman to Mr Krauser.

3. CHENG CHINZAN

Cheng's a student of the mighty Tung Fu-Rue but has traded his fighting honour for the lure of filthy lucre (that's money). Despite his renowned skills as a warrior, will Cheng's lust for more of the green stuff bring about his downfall?

1


2


3






Only in SNK Land... the five greatest characters names in the world ever!

1. Wolfgang Krauser
2. Geese Howard
3. Duck King
4. Franco Bash
5. Bob Wilson (no, really)

97 compatible with the 4MB cart. 2D fighting games may be a niche market, but the more arcade perfect translation the Saturn boasts, the more fans it's going to pick up. And you're certainly not going to see close conversions of these games on the N64 or PlayStation (for a laugh, check out Samurai Shodown IV on PS).

Real Bout Fatal Fury Special is a fun game to play. SNK might have let the fans down with a poorer-than-usual conversion from the Neo Geo arcade original, but it has a fair amount going for it: as usual, the music is utterly spectacular. And to be honest, it's still a vastly better-than-average fighting game.

But let's hope that in future, SNK continue with their original pledge to bring the arcade game home perfectly... no matter what the cost. And the odd game that isn't a side-on fighting game wouldn't go amiss either. As long as it isn't the woeful Hatrick Heroes, of course...



▲ New boy Laurence Blood (!) impales Duck King (double !) with his sword.

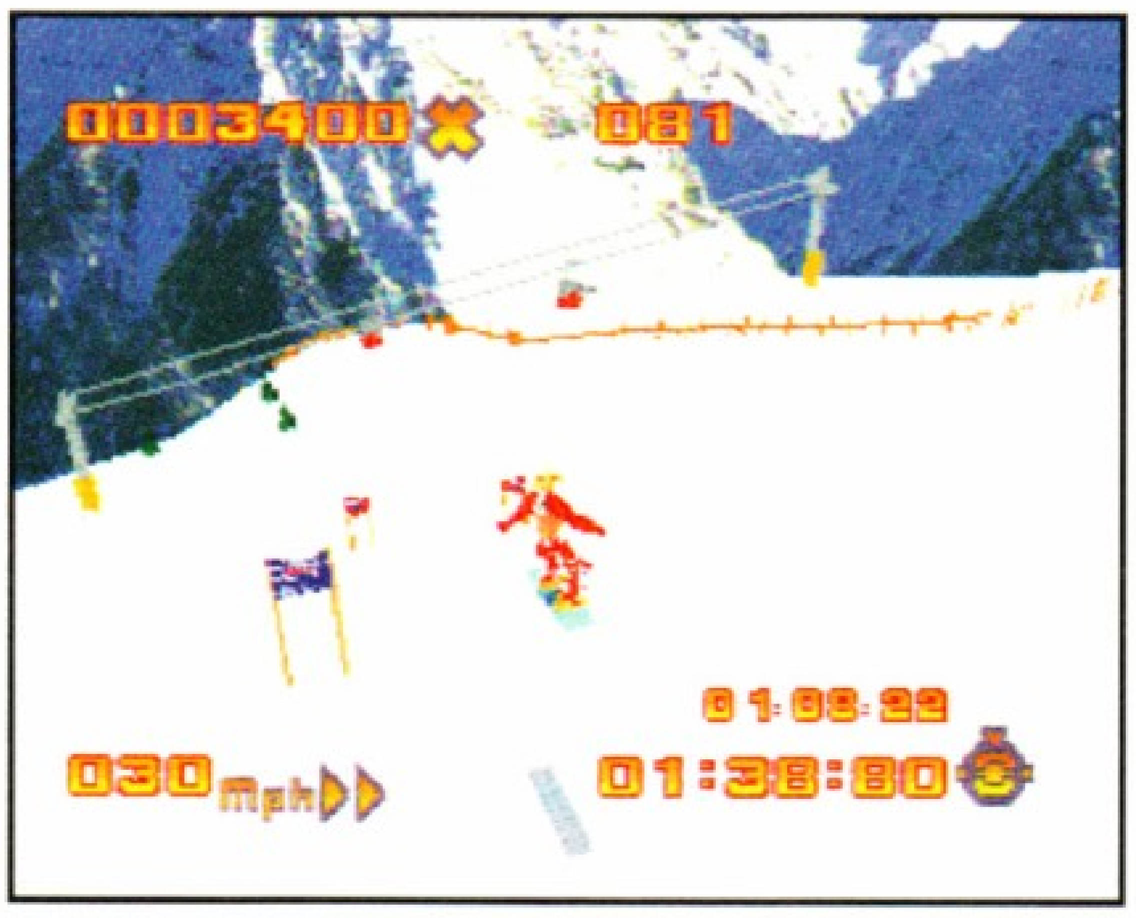


▲ A 1MB or 4MB RAM cart is needed to even load Real Bout Fatal Fury Special!

BY	SILICON DREAMS
RELEASE	MARCH
PRICE	IMPORT
STYLE	SNOWBOARDING
PLAYERS	2
HARDWARE	

With snowboarding games so popular these days, it seems like every company has their own radical racer in the works. Keen to bury Steep Slope Sliders and its ilk, Silicon Dreams unveil their alpine ace...

Chill



▲ Chill boasts realistic 25 fps snowboarding action!



▲ Players have the option of bombing down each course or simply using scenery for stunts galore. Radical dude!

They say it's always the quiet ones you have to watch out for. That statement certainly rings true for Banbury-based Silicon Dreams, a company once linked to the fabled US Gold and known throughout the industry for their quality sports titles. With third party Saturn support waning, it's encouraging to learn that Silicon Dreams have not one but two top games just waiting to grace Sega's 32-bit machine. By now you'll have read our exclusive news coverage of the potentially ball-busting World League Soccer '98, a game so impressive that Sega Europe have signed it up even though it'll be in direct competition with their own Worldwide Soccer '98. Keeping the quality coming is Chill, a snowboarding extravaganza due in March.

While many gamers may have shied away from snowboarding games before, the reaction to Steep Slope Sliders surprised software companies and fans alike. With a dearth of racing games and sports titles to choose from, many developers had overlooked the potential of the world's most popular winter activity. Now with Cool Boarders 2 on PlayStation and Zap! '98 on Saturn, snowboarding titles have the potential to overtake driving games in terms of playability, variety and fun. Chill is the culmination of two years worth of research and development and Silicon Dreams are confident that the game will surpass others in this genre thanks to amazing realism, a quality racing engine and more features than any snowboarding title deserves to have.





For starters, Chill has the distinction of being officially sponsored by Burton snowboards, renowned in their field for tough boards and even tougher all-weather clothing. But the appearance of the Burton name on a console game isn't just an excuse by Silicon Dreams to grab a bit of credibility. Nosiree. In fact Chill contains 21 actual Burton boards, each of which is designed to accurately replicate the look, feel and handling of their real life counterparts. Likewise the game's four playable characters are all decked out in cool Burton's gear (two outfits each) ready to take

> [Saturn owners **far and wide** will want to try their hands at this **snowboarding sensation!**]



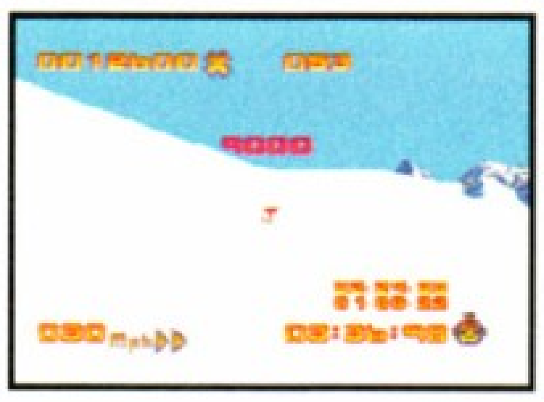
SILICON WHO?

You're probably wondering just who the heck Silicon Dreams are and what they've been up to recently. Well, years ago they were just another development team working for the now defunct US Gold. During their time there, the company programmed a number of titles including Olympics Games and Fever Pitch before breaking away to go it alone. Since then they've had a hand in the likes of Johnny Bazookatone, The Incredible Hulk, Olympic Soccer and Soccer '97 to name but a handful. As the last UK third party Saturn developer, Silicon Dreams have the honour of contributing both Chill and World League Soccer '98 to Sega's 32-bit library.











▲ Look out for the gun tower in the POW camp! Only joking.



▲ Use walls, rocks and logs to pull off cool tricks.



▲ Keeping your speed up while blasting through the mountain village requires some supreme skill. Are you up for it?







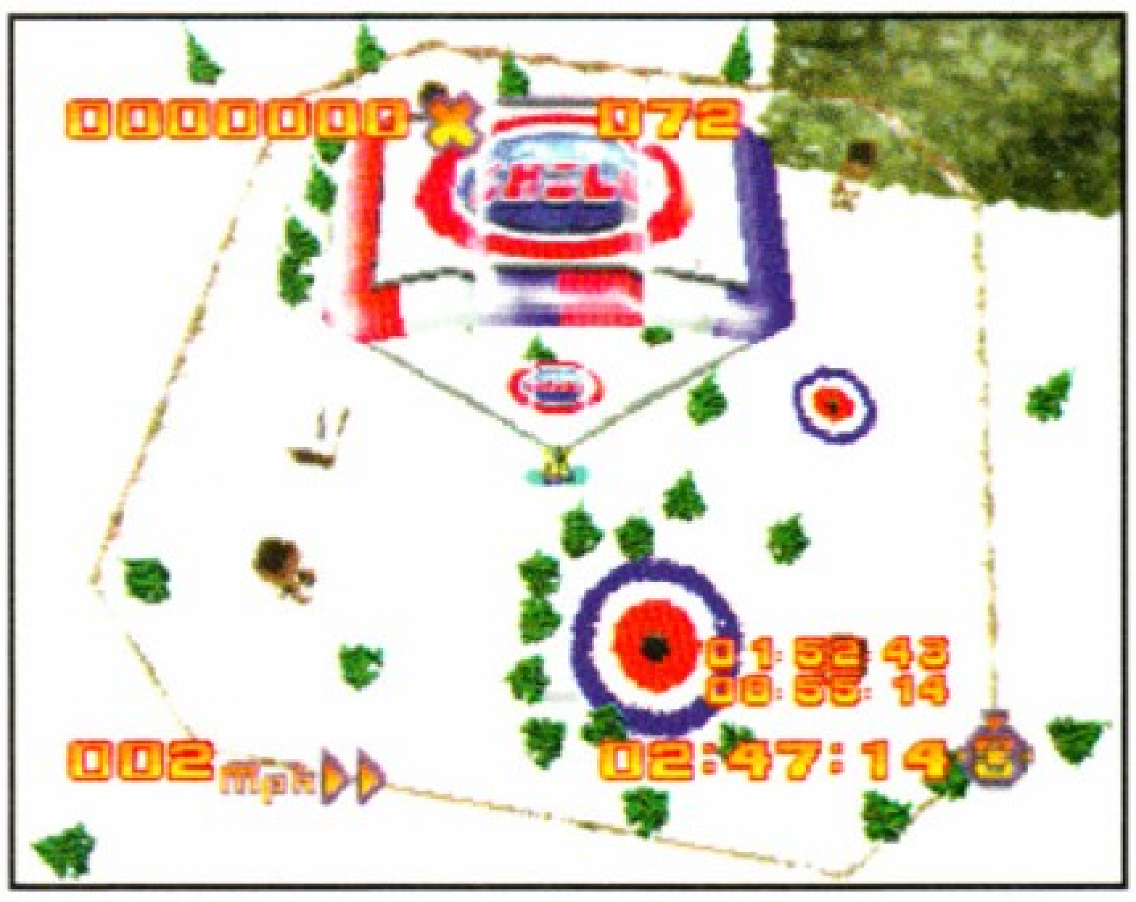
▲ Keep your eyes peeled for the falling pine trees!

on the challenge of the steepest mountain runs.

Yet it's the finely honed gameplay that ultimately gives Chill its killer edge. Whereas most snowboarding games have been limited one player affairs, Silicon Dreams have bolstered their title with an essential split-screen two player mode. What's more, players have the added option of viewing the racing action from either a horizontal or vertical split-screen point-of-view. We'd have loved to have seen this feature in Touring Cars or even the forthcoming Burning Rangers, but developers seem to shy away from offering players more than they think they require. Why not let players decide for themselves, eh? So that's exactly what Silicon Dreams have done. Cheers lads!

While Steep Slope Sliders attempted to capture just the speed and tricks that have made snowboarding so popular, Chill gives players the added incentive of finding their own racing lines. Steep Slope Sliders tended to channel players through some very narrow courses, but Chill opens its five tracks up allowing more interaction with scenery, more potential for awesome stunts and the freedom to fully explore each stage. This means that boarders can play at their own pace and either take their time to wander around the mountainside or bomb down extreme courses plunging over sheer drops at heart-stopping speeds. What's more, Silicon Dreams' talented development team have added multiple routes to each track, adding longevity and variety to each challenging course. And speaking of challenges, beating the first three tracks (and gaining access to the two hidden courses) requires some supreme skill as players have to amass a set amount of trick points and fast time if they hope to tackle the professional runs. Complete all five courses with adequate scores and a fifth secret rider

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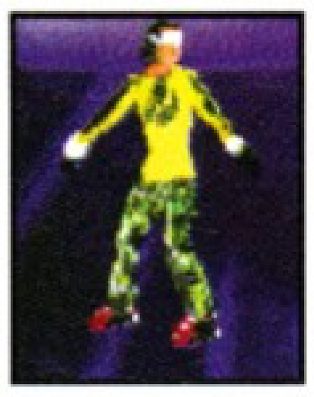
▲ Complete the Forest course with a nifty parachute jump.

Top Five snowboarding double entendres...

1. Bone
2. Bonk
3. Ride
4. Stiffy
5. "Twat"

RADICAL RACING DUDES

Chill features four instantly playable characters, all of whom have their own individual racing talents and personalities. Selecting the correct player will give you either a speed or trick advantage as well as a nifty choice of snowboarding togs.



YOYO

A right show-off, make no mistake. YoYo performs her best stunts on a shorter board, allowing her to combine speed with her own flamboyant racing style. Often criticised by her fellow boarders for taking too many risks, YoYo is always the first to try out new moves.



BONE

The fastest boarder in the game, regardless of which deck he opts for. A little arrogant, Bone likes nothing more than plummeting down the steepest of slopes an launching himself as far as possible. With little regard for his own safety or that of others, Bone laughs in the face of danger!



TRIX

As her name suggests, the foxy Trix is a master of snowboarding stunts. Always keen to prove herself as tough-as-nails rider, this blonde-haired beauty is willing to risk her neck just for the chance to prove she's as good as her male counterparts. This is one lady you don't wanna mess with!



GOAT

In the same league as Bone, Goat combines raw speed with a no-nonsense attitude. Seemingly invincible on the slopes, Goats snowboarding skills are the envy of many a professional rider. Not as fast as Bone, but faster turning time makes up for lack of velocity.



MYSTERY BOARDER

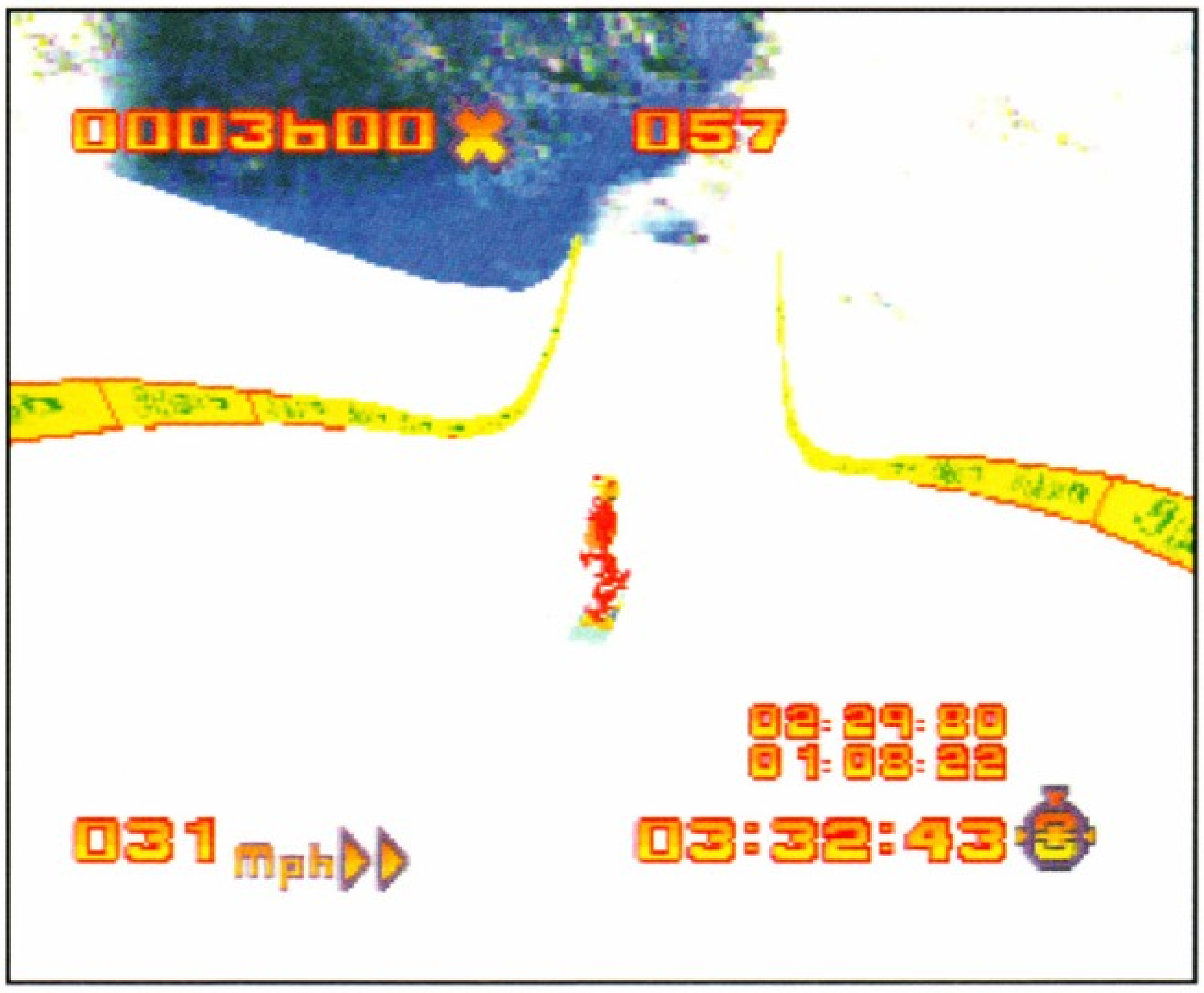
Currently under wraps. We've seen this talented rider strutting his stuff and frankly we're impressed. He combines amazing control with superior speed and agility. Not only that but his "outfit" is certainly the most original in the game. That's all we're saying for the time being!



▲ Rough terrain is guaranteed to slow you down.



▲ There's stunt potential aplenty here. Aim for the rooftops and a massive bonk bonus.



▲ The finale of the Winter Sports track features an awesome ski jump ramp.

THE GLOBAL STYLE DEPARTMENT

With the backing of Burton Snowboards, Chill has the distinction of featuring officially licensed snowboarding gear and decks. The game contains 21 boards, each of which has its own top speed, handling and stunt height. so while some players may opt for a fast deck and bomb their way down each course, more skilled players can go for the trick boards and rack up massive scores.





















▲ There are a whopping 21 boards to choose from, folks.




▲ Chill's FMV intro even features an original rap choon...

>>

appears. We're not at liberty to say who the mystery boarder is, but Silicon Dreams have revealed that he's the "king of the valley"...

Speed is certainly important in any snowboarding title, but Chill also utilises a new kind of trick system. In Steep Slope Sliders, players could only pull of radical stunts

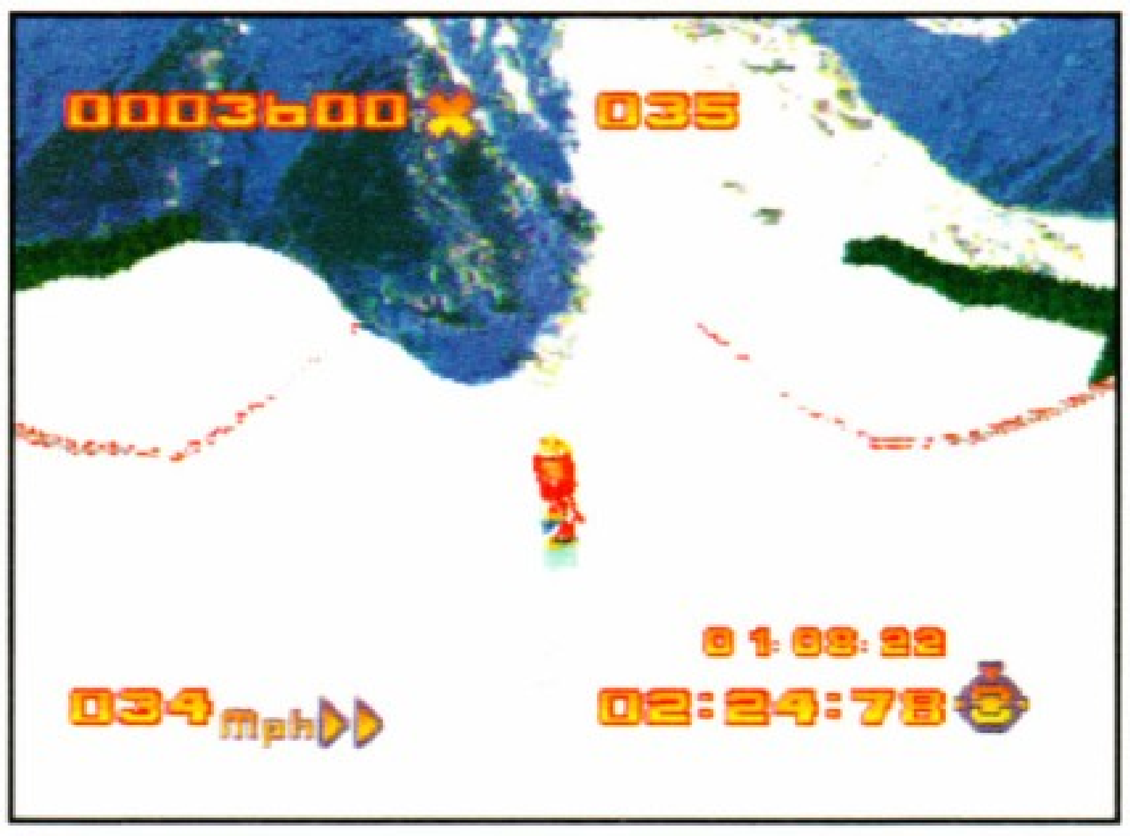
if they managed to leap from rocks or plummet from ledges. In Chill, you can pull of stunts as often as you like and wherever you want. Of course there are areas that provide superior tricks and stunts, but the sheer freedom to pull off moves at will makes Chill extremely user friendly. In total there are over 30 tricks and these moves can be combined allowing players to notch staggering final scores. Chill also introduces players to the concept of bonking. Stop that laughing at the back! this style of stunts and tricks require boarders to bounce off one object then another and so on. The longer you keep the bonk going, the more points you're rewarded with. To top off each course, Silicon Dreams have added a number of dangers and obstacles for players to overcome ranging from landslides and rockfalls to multiple surfaces and crashing trees. Make it to the end of each track in one piece and you'll face a final challenge whether it be a death-defying Pilotwings parachute drop or mad dash after a police car.



▲ Gain extra points by sliding through the checkpoints.



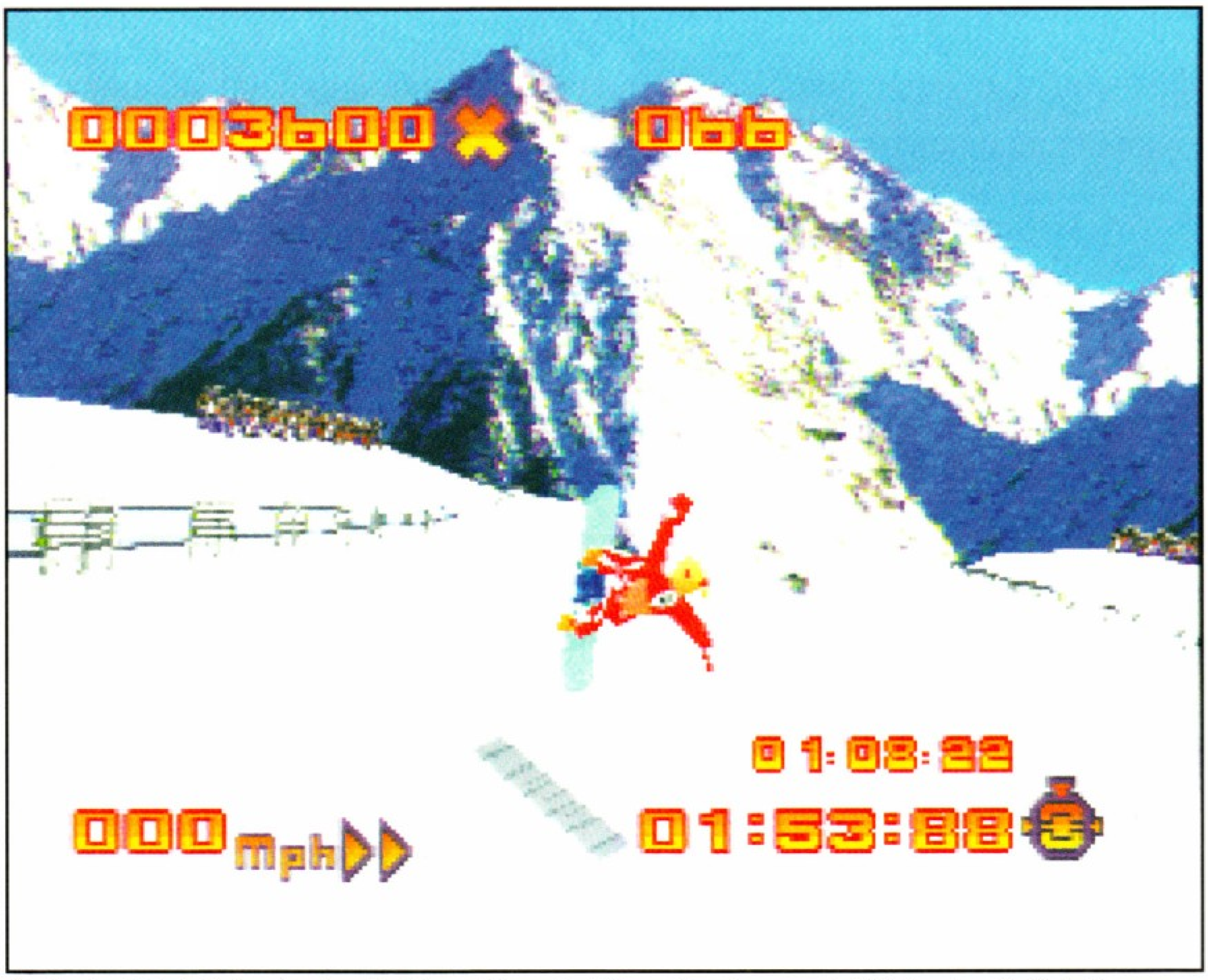


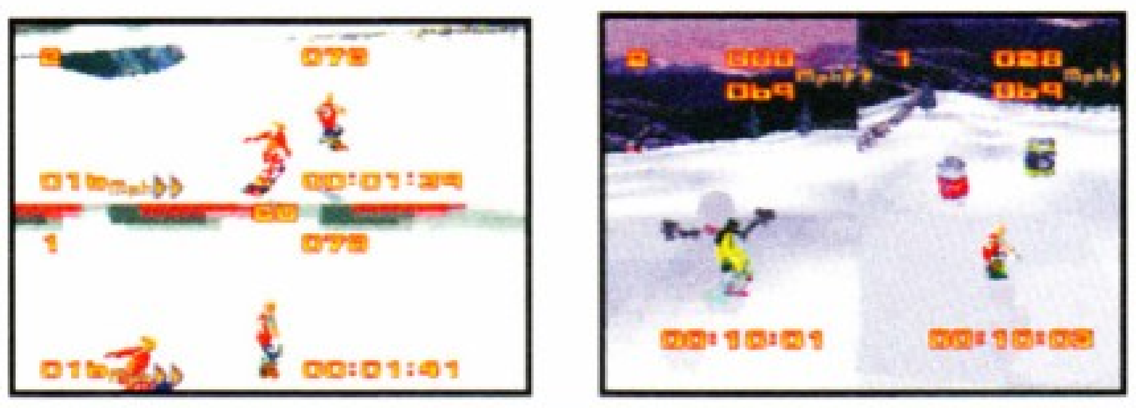
▲ Keep your arms back in order to reduce wind resistance.



▲ See the cop car? You'll race this rozza a little later!



▲ Check out the half pipe. Snowboarding fans will know that this section of a course is THE place to pull off stunts.



▲ The two player mode provides a real tough challenge.

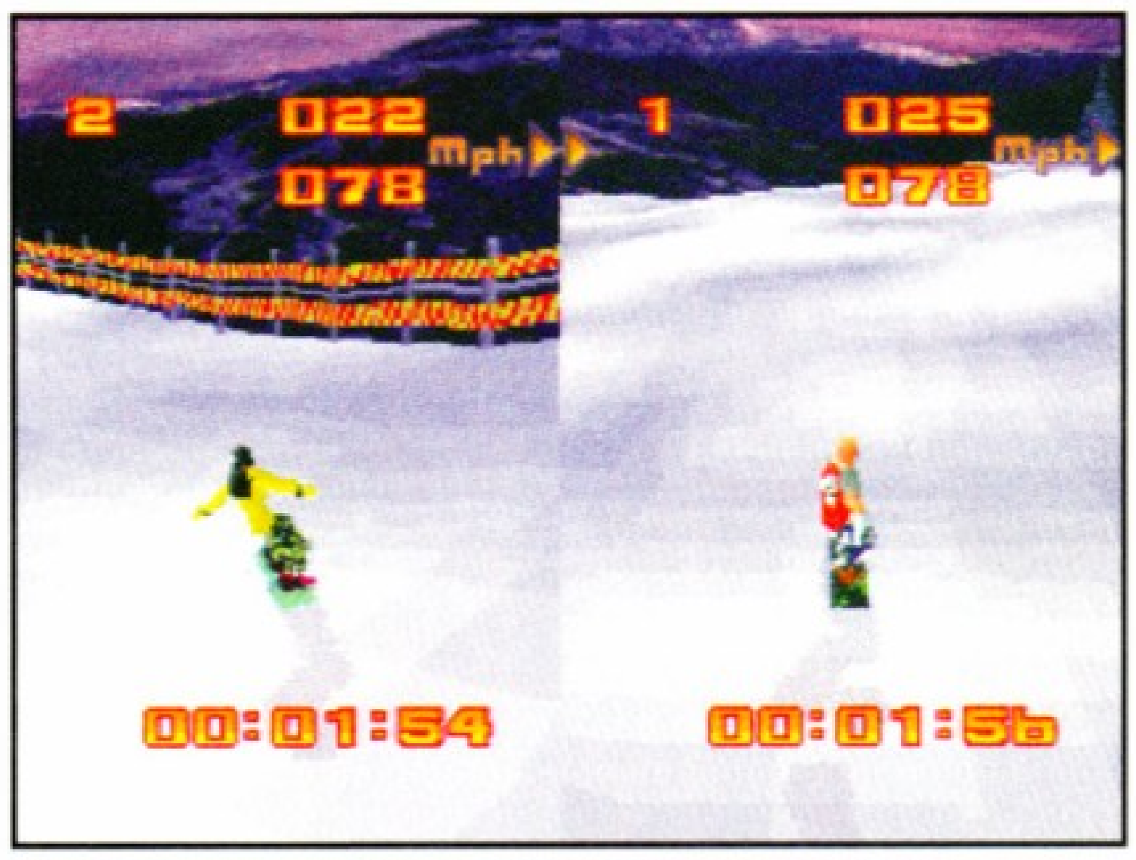
With the gameplay being so solid, it's a relief that Chill's visuals manage to keep up with the pulse-pounding action. Clever use of dips and hills hides any annoying pop-up, the game jogs along at a nippy 25 frames per second and each character boasts skeleton-based animation and up to 400 polygons. Throw in clever weather effects and atmospheric lighting and Chill comes across as a bit of a looker. Whoops!

Mustn't forget a quick mention to the game's hilarious intro which features motion-captured dudes strutting their funky stuff to FMV snowboarding footage Silicon Dreams' very own rap track.

Quite a cool package we're sure you'll agree. With a release date set for sometime in March, Silicon Dreams have taken the brave step of publishing Chill themselves. Of course with a title of this quality, it's a safe bet that Saturn owners far and wide will want to try their hand at this snowboarding sensation. We'll bring you a full and frank showcase next month as well as the first review of Silicon Dreams' stunner. And if that wasn't incentive enough, keep your eyes peeled for our EXCLUSIVE Chill demo in the next few months as well as the chance to win loads of cool Burtons snowboarding gear!

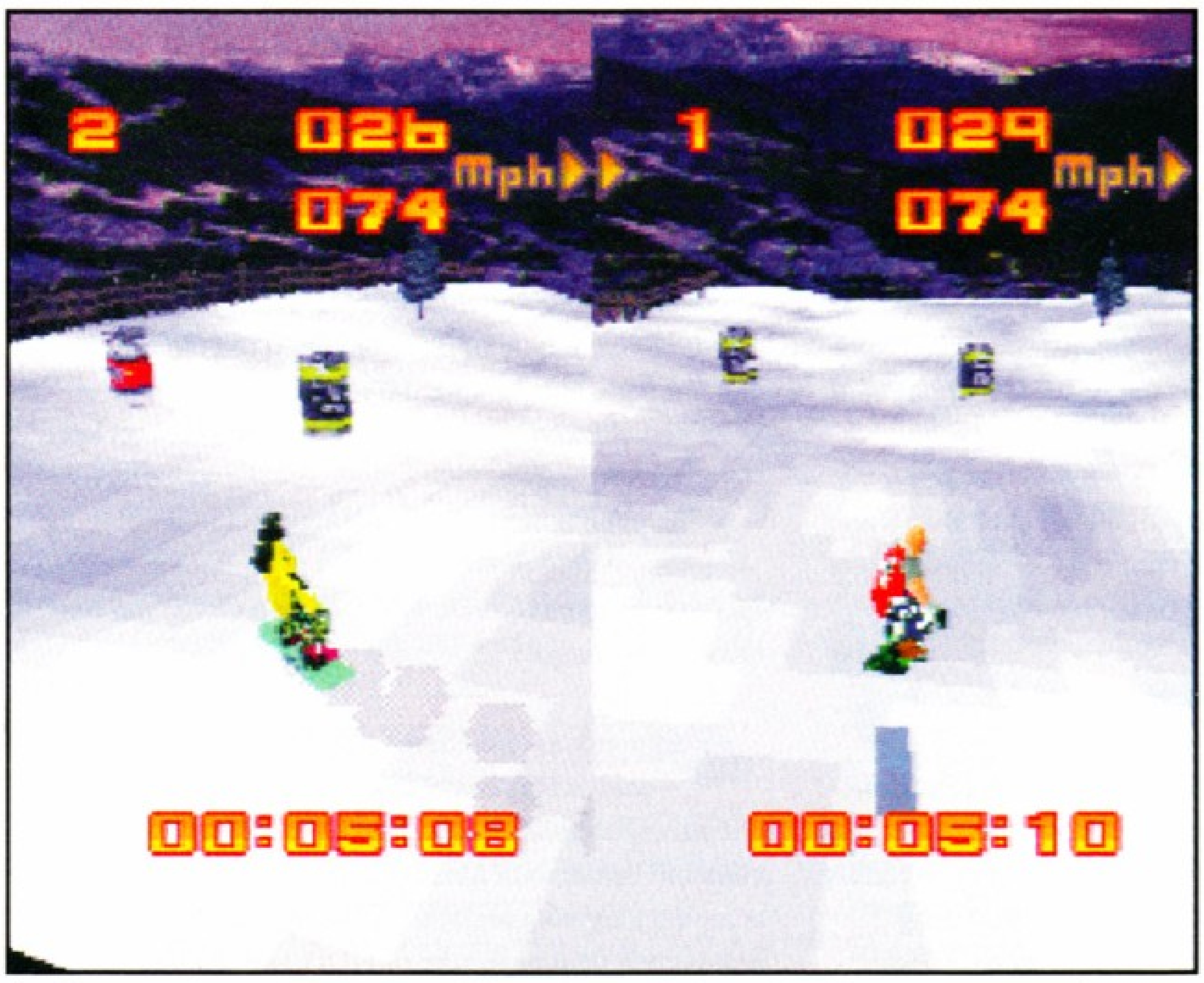
THE GROOVE RIDERS

Chill has the distinction of featuring both horizontal and vertical split-screen two player modes. While many driving games feature split-screen option, it's usually a horizontal affair, with players having no choice but to watch in widescreen mode. It might seem strange considering Silicon Dreams are keen on emphasising Chill's wide tracks, but the game's vertical split-screen option performs remarkable well. Chill keeps itself going at a steady 25fps and there's no glitching or warping of polygons. Impressive stuff indeed. What's more, the option of two views should stop squabbles and "lack of vision" excuses.



▲ Split-screen action in Silicon Dreams' cool Chill. We're confident that this snowboarding sensation could even topple the mighty Steep Slope Sliders!





▲ The two-player mode has incredible action-packed graphics. Beat your opponent!



▲ If you suffer from vertigo, then Chill may just induce that familiar nauseous sensation.

Virtua Writer™

We've received hod-loads of post-Christmas correspondence this month, many of them concerning the Saturn software line-up for '98 (or lack of). Now that's fine, but let's have a bit more optimism next month, eh? The future isn't anywhere near as bleak as what Sega's knockers would have you believe. Be sure to drop us a line a line at: VIRTUA WRITER, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, 37-39 Millharbour, Isle of Dogs, London, E14 9TZ, or email us at virtua.writer@ecm.emap.com. The sender of the most entertaining read wins a limited edition VF3 book, if we have any left... in which case we'll rustle up a game or something.

STREET FIGHTER vs TELETUBBIES

DEAR SSM

You asked who the Street Fighters should fight in their next battle. I think that this time they should take on a combination of two teams: the Teletubbies and the Spice Girls. The Teletubbies have all of the children around the world at their disposal. They could be tough competitors! The Spice Girls have Sporty Spice who can do all this fancy stuff (not as good as Chun Li though).



SF vs Spice Girls and Teletubbies? Unlikely, methinks.

Ginger Spice could deafen any opposing Street Fighter with her vocal abilities. The rest can all have their own special abilities, I won't go into them now.

It would be a tough competition, but I think that the Street Fighters would still win 9-0, as basically neither the Teletubbies nor the Spice Girls can fight quite like well trained martial artists... if at all!

S Bluemel, Northern Ireland

Why not draw on the utterings of Posh Spice herself when it comes to dishing out the Spice Girls' "special" abilities. Apparently she shops better than any one, Geri does all the talking and Mel B can pull any one! Actually, I have noticed that the Teletubbies have a great deal in common with Capcom themselves in that there is a huge amount of repetition involved... RICH

DRIVEL AND SHITE...

DEAR SSM

By now you should be aware of your rival magazine's demise. I would like you all to reflect on several rather important points before cracking open your champagne and patting yourselves on the back.

Firstly, without competition, there tends to be complacency (look at the Soviet car industry). Therefore I trust your professionalism will override any feelings of arrogance, pomposity or pretension you all may be experiencing since Sega Power's untimely death. SSM's faithful will not be too amused with endless pages of drivel and shite [*Yeah right, as if - RICH*]. Be warned...

Secondly, is this masterful position you now hold not rather sad? Support for the Saturn is waning from all sides, whether it be in the form of software developers, retail outlets or magazine publishers.

SSM readers need some words of wisdom, you are almost solely representing us. Please do us justice.

Rob McGinley, Tyne and Wear

The masterful position SSM now holds is quite sad. Take it from me, there wasn't a dry eye in the office when we heard of Saturn Power's demise. However, we have no intention of being complacent Rob. In fact, over the next few issues you will see a definite improvement in the content and design of the mag in addition to a marked increase in the frequency of our demo discs. LEE

Let me just say that we do things our own way here at SSM. We constantly strive to innovate the mag and put out the best possible package each month because a) it keeps sales high and b) we have pride in our work and c) we get paid to do so. The existence (or lack) of competition is largely irrelevant. RICH

IT'S A LONDON THING

DEAR SSM

I use the London underground and the buses very often. I have noticed that there are lots of adverts around for computer games. For example Duke Nukem 3D, Fighting Force and many more! But they do not have any indication that they are out or coming out on the Saturn! Why the f#@* not? Can't Sega afford to advertise, especially



Duke Nukem 3D - no advertising, but it's still a top game.

when games like Duke Nukem 3D are much better on the Saturn? Croc was the only game that said it was also coming out on the Saturn and that really annoys me. So please answer my important question: Why doesn't Sega advertise very much?

William Kraemer, London

As neither Eidos or GT Interactive are handling the Saturn versions of Fighting Force (since canned) and Duke Nukem 3D respectively, they're hardly likely to spend thousands of pounds on advertising them. But what you really want to know is why Sega themselves aren't advertising, right? Well, advertising is a very expensive business, and Sega simply don't have the massive resources enjoyed by the likes of Sony. It's unfortunate, I know. But that's life. LEE

VIRGIN ON THE RIDICULOUS

DEAR SSM

I think that SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE and all its readers should write to complain about the fact that Virgin Interactive have ruined Christmas for most Saturn



At last! A definite release date for Marvel Super Heroes!

owners. What am I talking about? Marvel Super Heroes, that's what! The game may be the most fantastic beat 'em up available on home machines, but sadly Virgin Interactive couldn't be bothered releasing the game before the new year. No, sorry, I'm wrong. They did have the PlayStation version of the game in the shops two months ago (by the time the mag is out), despite the fact that it isn't really that good due to slowdown and lack of character animation.

When I originally discovered that the Street Fighter Collection had been delayed until February, I presumed it was because Virgin didn't want to detract from the sales of the other epic Capcom game (MSH). But nooooo. I can't think that Virgin have done themselves any favours with this one, seeing that most Saturn owners wanted a new beat 'em up on Christmas day and Marvel was the one to have.

I understood that Virgin was leaving the Saturn scene but I hoped that they would do so gracefully rather than just slack off. Virgin are a bad reflection on both Capcom and Sega.

Hayden Scott-Baron, Cheshire

PS I'm now glad that Richard Branson's f#@*ing balloon blew away.

Yep, we wholeheartedly agree with your sentiments Hayden. But I'm happy to say that by the time you read this the situation should have resolved itself, with Marvel Super Heroes scheduled for a January 24 release date. The story goes that Virgin Interactive originally allocated a December 19 release for MSH, but made a last-ditch attempt to package the

game with the 1MB cart (a pointless exercise given that Sega are releasing the 4MB cart with X-Men vs Street Fighter which is compatible with MSH). Naturally, this delayed the proceedings somewhat, resulting in Marvel missing the pre-Christmas sales frenzy. But as I said, the new release date means it should be available in the shops now. Probably. As for the excellent Street Fighter Collection, the disappointing news is that Virgin have pushed its release waaaaay back to March, damn them, so not to interfere with sales of MSH... LEE
...And just in time to be interfered with by sales of X-Men vs Street Fighter. Well done! RICH**

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO FIFA '98?

Dear SSM
I have noticed the past few weeks whilst out shopping for new games that EA Sports don't seem to release all the main titles like NHL '98 and FIFA Road to World Cup '98 at the same time as they do for the PlayStation and PC. I would like to say this is the second year I have had to wait longer for the top sports titles than my friends



Why bother with FIFA, when SWWS '98 is so much better?

who own PlayStations so I wish EA would get there act together and release all conversions at the same time. Could you answer the simple question of why Saturn owners have to wait longer than PS and PC owners for the best sports games? I would like to say EA get your act together for next year!!!

Matthew Stannett, Devon

Nooooooo! Almost without exception Electronic Arts' produce this year has been a bag o' shite. Take the much-hyped FIFA '98 for example. It's complete arse. Hence the paltry 58% rating I awarded it in the previous issue. Then there's NBA '98 and NASCAR '98, neither of which scored above 70%. Do you see a pattern developing here? Of course, NHL '98 could be the exception to the rule... LEE

NTSC SWITCH... BRILLIANT!

Dear SSM
I am writing to you and your readers to help them decide over this NTSC 50/60 Hz switch thingy. I got one before Christmas, it cost £50 and I had to wait a week or two to get it back. But it's brilliant! It does what you said, gives a full-screen, full speed display, but also makes PAL games like Sega Rally and Bust-A-Move 3 even faster! You know on games like Tomb Raider where the FMV window is only small? Well, it doesn't make it full-screen, but it's certainly a lot bigger. This works on all 22 of my games and on your demo discs. By the way,



The NTSC 50/60hz switch sorts out poor PAL conversions.

you say that Steep Slope Sliders will be a good PAL conversion except for the slight speed loss, well, with the 50/60 Hz switch, your demo of it is outstanding! So much so in fact, that I will buy the full game. Also, on Sonic R, the borders disappear and it runs even faster! Keep up the good work.

David Thornley, Darlington

We've said it before and we'll say it again. With a swelling pool of quality import games unlikely to surface in this country (Dead or Alive, All Japan Pro Wrestling Featuring Virtua, Metal Slug etc), an NTSC 50/60 Hz switch is an essential piece of kit for serious gamers. Not only does it allow you to play any import title full-screen and full-speed, but it improves the speed and display size of poor PAL translations. LEE

TOMB RAIDER... AGAIN

Dear SSM
I have just got myself a PlayStation. I'm not deserting my Saturn (it is still my machine of preference) but I simply had to own Tomb Raider 2. Having just completed it, I have to say it was an awesome game, though not quite as good as the first one. Also I didn't think it was doing anything the Saturn couldn't handle so boo to Core for making me purchase the other machine.



Anyway, onto the point of this letter.
Normally, whenever a ground breaking title comes out, it is swiftly followed into the shops by a glut of clones and cash-ins. For evidence of this, just look at all the PC's Doom and Command & Conquer clones, the Saturn & PlayStation's 3D beat 'em up and racing games and in the 16-bit days all the Street Fighter and Mario wannabes. Whilst most of these titles are lacklustre ripoffs, some gems will be born - Duke Nukem, Hexen, Dead or Alive, and in his own way SEGA's own Sonic. Why has this not been the case with Tomb Raider (itself a 3D clone of Prince of Persia/Flashback)? After completing the first game I waited with bated breath for "Cavern Hunter" and "Grave Robber", each starring their own gun toting vixens but none were forthcoming. Is it that Core are just that much better at coding and no one else could write one? Having played Quake it's certain Lobotomy could manage it. I know games take time to develop, but TR has been out for well over a year. Perhaps you guys know of some such games in development.
With TR2 not coming out on the Saturn, someone could have really made a killing by filling the void left by the axing of that title. TR is possibly the most fun I've had on my own on a console and I would love to see the

BRIEFLY...

Dear SSM
My friend read in Saturn Power [that was his first mistake - RICH] that they think the Saturn is going out? I want your honest opinion, what do you think?

Alec Thomson, South Wales

Hey, there's still plenty to look forward to over the next year, as the answer to the following question ably demonstrates. LEE

The Saturn is indeed going out. Specifically down the pub for a couple of pints, then onto the cinema to catch "Titanic", then for a curry afterwards. Honestly... I guess the phrase "Don't believe everything you read" springs to mind. Unless it's written by me, obviously. RICH

Dear SSM
I'm thinking of exchanging my Saturn for a PlayStation. I mean, what have Saturn owners got to look forward to in '98?

Bryan Robinson, Manchester

Quite a bit actually. What about House of the Dead, Winter Heat, Burning Rangers, Panzer Dragoon Saga, Steep Slope Sliders, Grandia, Shinning Force 3, X-Men vs Street Fighter, Marvel Super Heroes vs Street Fighter, Vampire Savior, Street Fighter 3, Resident Evil 2, Alien Resurrection and an awesome new footie title from Sega which we'll reveal in the very next issue. Oh yes. LEE

Dear SSM
Is your HMV chart a fix? The reason I ask this is because HMV in York and in the Metro Centre don't have one single Saturn game in stock, but loads of crappy PlayStation games.

Luke Dobbs, Darlington

No. Though many smaller branches of HMV are no longer stocking Saturn software, the larger branches are continuing to do so. It is the sales of Saturn software in these stores upon which our charts are based. Honest. LEE

Dear SSM
Thanks for the last couple of demo discs. But why don't you give us readers what we really want, eh? Duke and Quake! None of this Enemy Zero malarkey.

Mark Andre, Kent

Sorted. LEE

Dear SSM
I'm an avid Sega fan and am desperate for hard news on the new system. Will you be covering Dural stuff? If so, when?
Andrew Platt, York

As you can see from this month's news, details of the new system are now beginning to filter through. Rest assured SSM will keep you updated with all the latest developments. LEE

(deep breath) explore-platform-shoot-'em-up adventure genre (phew!) have a few more titles to its name. What do you guys think. Keep up the good work - you're the only ones left.

Colin Upfield, Crawley

So basically what you want to know is whether there are any Tomb Raider-type games coming out on the Saturn, right? Well, Alien Resurrection is strongly rumoured to follow in a similar vein to Core's epic videogame and the forthcoming Burning Rangers shares certain attributes with the game also. But as for straight clones of Tomb Raider, there are none that we know of. Sorry. LEE

TIGHT AS A GNAT'S CHUFF

DEAR SSM

I bought a Saturn in January '97 and have been buying your magazine since June. Your magazine is definitely the pick the bunch, but I do have a problem - the PRICE! I mean, this issue that I'm looking at now cost my mum just under a fiver. Although it only comes out once a month this is still an awful lot to pay. The standard price is £2.75 (now that I don't mind) but with a demo disc it's £4.75! That's making us pay an extra two quid. Surely it doesn't cost you that much to make. I would have thought the games on the disc you'd get for free, as it's good advertising for the company. So what I reckon is that we're paying an extra two quid for the plastic cover and the Sellotape that holds it on to the mag. What have you got to say for yourselves SSM? What are us readers really paying for?

Ewan Gordon, Scotland

Due to a drop in our advertising revenue, we were faced with the dilemma of increasing the cover price ever so slightly, or lessening our production costs and thus the overall quality of the mag. We chose the former in order to maintain the high standards our readership demands. As such, the standard price of the mag has risen a tad to £2.95 or £4.75 for a demo disc issue. The extra £1.80 the demo issues necessitate cover the cost of the actual CDs and the reproduction process. And the Sellotape and plastic. It's still exceptional value for money and cheaper than the official PS mag. With letters such as yours, it's no wonder the Scots have a reputation for being as tight as a gnat's chuff. LEE

BLOCK-BUSTED

DEAR SSM

I am writing to complain about the Saturn's software, or should I say lack of it, at Blockbuster Video. I quote from the Account Executive's reply to such criticism in issue #24 "We will be supporting Quake, Duke Nukem 3D and Sonic R amongst others during the Christmas period." Yeah right. And where is this exactly? I haven't seen them in our local store, nor anywhere else for that matter. They do stock a few good games such as Exhumed, NiGHTS, SFA2, but the remaining few are rubbish like Titan Wars, Gex, Three Dirty Dwarves and Toshinden. Can't they at least stock some quality recent releases, then more people might rent games from them. They don't seem to mind getting all the latest PS and N64 titles, so why not the mighty Saturn titles?

Andrew Christie, Wirral



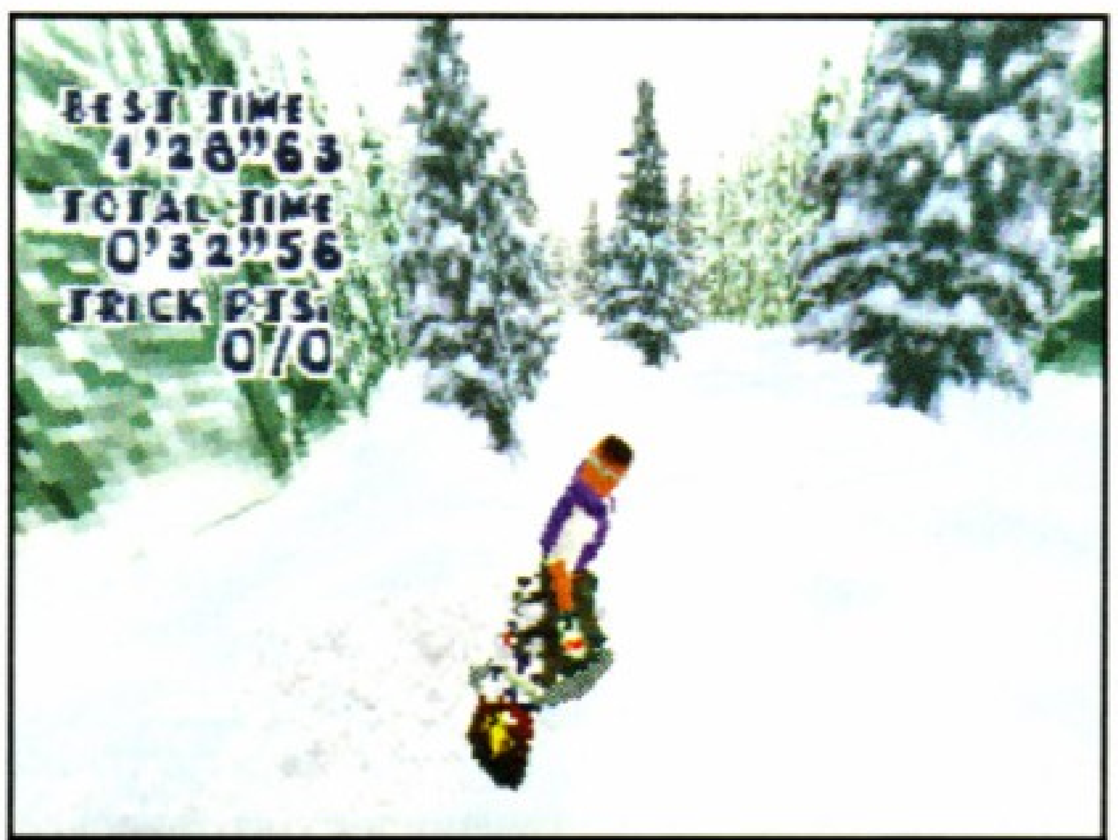
No Quake at Blockbuster. But hey, what's wrong with Gex?

Yep, it's pretty fair to say that Blockbuster Video have a pretty crap line-up of Saturn software for rental and retail, despite promises to the contrary in an earlier issue. But there's not a lot we can do I'm afraid. We did try getting some sort of official statement from Blockbuster, alas nobody was available for comment at the time of writing. Sorry, we did try. LEE

SEGA = GOD

DEAR SSM

I'd just like to comment that... Steep Slope Sliders is bloody fantastic! I love it, yesterday I spent about four hours on it without even realising. I know its only a demo, but the amount of things you can do, it's just,



Another awesome demo on the front of issue #27. Oh yes.

well, brilliant! Please put more demos like this on the cover CDs. Over the last few months the Saturn has been getting some quality goods from Sega, what with Quake, Duke Nukem 3D, Last Bronx, and not forgetting future projects such as the 4MB cart (hurrah for Sega), House of the Dead (bollocks to Time Crisis!) and now X-men vs Street Fighter! Sega is the computer equivalent of God! (why not many people buy the machine is a total mystery). Thanks for your time, I'm off to point and laugh at my PlayStation and N64 owning friends and play Steep Slope Sliders.

James Thornhill, Cumbria.

Well, that settles that then. LEE
You won't play SSS very well if you're laughing *and* pointing at the same time, will you? RICH

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

DEAR SSM.

Your mag is excellent and I have been reading since issue #1. But I've just read that Saturn Power is dead! I am extremely worried. I have had my Saturn since August and I have many great games (NiGHTS is cool!) but I have just read the forward of the latest Saturn Power. They admit defeat to you but they claim there is just not a market for the Saturn anymore. So much that they cannot continue publishing. Also the staff in shops like Game are telling people that Sega are going to stop making games for it early in the new year, and every day more information is known about the new console. Here's the catch, you have been continuously filling your pages with hundreds of previews and showcases of excellent arcade conversions, but House of the Dead will not be coming out until Easter proving that Sega still have a long term interest, why else would they spend millions on publishing Sonic R on an failing console, why not wait for the new console? Anyway enough of my ranting , keep up the good work!

David 'Zombie Killing' Balson, London

Sega have stated on numerous occasions that they remain committed to the Saturn for the whole of '98. Yeah, there maybe fewer games coming out than last year, but overall the quality is of a far greater standard. Just flick through this issue for further proof of that very point. LEE

THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE

DEAR SSM

I have owned a Sega Saturn now for around ten months and have followed SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE ever since. I have noticed the hard work you lot have put into it and believe me, it has paid off. Your magazine is

BOOK WINNER



ROUND TWO: FIGHT!

DEAR SSM ,

I've been a fan of Capcom's 2D fighting games since the original Street Fighter hit the arcades all those years ago. I found your X-Men vs Street Fighter coverage in issue #27 very thought provoking, especially the "What would really happen?" one-on-one match ups. I agree with a lot of the comments made, but I think you took the merits of the X-men as comic super heroes and took the Street Fighters skills as they appear on the game. If you look at the Street Fighters' abilities as they appeared in the manga film, the odds are severely shortened in some of the aforementioned one-on-one battles. At the end of the day, opinions will always vary and that's where the real fun of these games comes from, right ? Well, here are the ones I disagreed with.

CYCLOPS vs RYU

Everyone knows Cyclops' optic blasts are devastating but even in the comics any half-decent super hero/villain regularly manages to avoid it with ease. All Ryu would need to muster is a basic jab dragon punch to send Cyclops' optic specs flying (how many times have we seen this happen), thus leaving him totally helpless.

WINNER: RYU

GAMBIT vs KEN

I called this one even, it all depends which one of these hot heads manages to keep his cool. In fact I wouldn't be surprised if both of them just stood there taunting each other.

WINNER: TIE

SABRETOOTH vs DHALSIM

Dhalsim's mastery of yoga is legendary and his teleporting skills leave Sabretooth not knowing

much better now, but with the sad, but expected demise of your rival Saturn Power, a lot now lies on your shoulders.
1997 has not been a great year for the Saturn, we had a very dry summer in terms of software, though it did get better towards the end of the year with the likes of Quake, Duke, Sonic R and SWWS '98. However, Sega cannot rely on updates and PC ports alone, and they shouldn't base their whole advertising campaign around a single game (Sonic R in this instance... it needed more tracks anyway). Touring Car was billed as one of Sega's biggest games of '98, yet turned out to be a massive disappointment. On a good note though, I enjoyed seeing Sega's advertising billboards on Match of the Day [*so did I - it made the match so much more entertaining - RICH*] and touring car coverage.
Although '98 will see less third party development for Sega's system, it could still be a bloody great year for games. House of the Dead, Winter Heat, Panzer Dragoon Saga, Burning Rangers, X-Men vs Street Fighter etc, are on paper at least, a formidable line-up. However, lessons have to be learned from the Touring Car fiasco, we desperately need a a good racing game to topple Sega Rally.
I personally love football games and I am still waiting for another decent one besides SWWS '98. Electronic Arts have kept Saturn owners waiting ages for FIFA '98. Lastly, keep up the good work.

Rasheed Bedri, Somewhere

Well, that told us. LEE
Yes, I am chastened and bowed by this spectacular review of the obvious. RICH

what day it is. Dhalsim eventually tires of this and paralyses his victim with a yogic stare (It worked on E.HONDA remember). Never underestimate the power of the mind.
WINNER: DHALSIM

ROGUE vs CAMMY
Cammy is just like a bar of soap , soft and good for the skin but not much use in a fight. Rogue flies about knocking the crap out Cammy leaving her for dead well before Bison gets a chance use his Psycho powers on the X-Man.
WINNER: ROGUE

The other match-ups were spot on.
Results: X-Men 4, Street Fighters 3 (1 tie)

Other considerations: The X-Men as a group are truly formidable but separately they have severe weaknesses which is why they work best as a team. One-on-one Bison would beat ANYONE if the representation of him in the manga film is to be believed, and Akuma's powers have yet to be seen in any fictional scenario. Just a thought!

Gareth Westwood , Preston.

I really don't buy this "Ryu dragon punching off Cyclops' visor" routine. What's Cyke actually going to be doing at this point? Eating his dinner? Reading poetry? Removing his visor would only unleash the full terrible power of his optic blasts any way, so rather than being knocked out, Ryu would probably be killed in an instant. I originally had Ken winning, but remembered Gambit's agility is also enhanced by his mutant power, so Kenneth wouldn't stand a chance. Sabretooth is a psycho. If Professor X's mental powers can't fully restrain him I doubt Dhalsim stands much of a chance. I agree with you about Rogue though. At that point I was feeling very sorry for the poor old SFers... No, regardless of your well-thought out arguments, Capcom's finest are gonna get spanked until their cheeks are cherry-red. RICH

A MATTER OF GREAT CONCERN

Dear SSM
I am writing to you regarding the decision to hand over the programming of the forthcoming shoot 'em up House of the Dead to Tantalus. My main reason for concern being their past record on producing rather poor games in terms of graphics. Good examples of this are the WipEout series and Manx TT. I'm not saying that these games are poor gameplay wise, as they clearly aren't. I am merely saying that this superb game maybe ruined in terms of graphics and should have been put into more capable hands.
A good alternative to Tantalus could have been AM2, producers of the highly successful shoot 'em up Virtua Cop. I am sure that you have noticed Virtua Cop is a stunning game graphically and gameplay wise and I am sure that you will agree with me when I say that House of the Dead would have been in more capable hands if left to AM2.
I quote from your magazine "Manx TT and Wipeout 2097 were less than stunning". So I do not believe that you can deny that HotD would not have been a better overall product if left to the likes of AM2 rather than Tantalus.

Ollie Walton, Herts

What it basically boils down to is this: we've seen House of the Dead running and you haven't. So obviously we're in a better position to comment on whether Sega's confidence in Tantalus is justified (or not, as the case maybe). True, whilst Manx TT wasn't exactly the best racer on the Saturn, it was a spot-on conversion of the less than impressive coin-op. As for WipEout 2097, compromises were inevitable given that the original version was programmed with the PlayStation's strengths in mind. Back to the point though, the latest version of House of the Dead featured in this month's issue is looking seriously impressive. LEE
Everyone seems to forget that AM stands for "Amusement Machine", not "Saturn". Only in special cases (Last Bronx, AM2 titles) will the original team undertake the Saturn conversion work themselves. But hey - if HotD isn't really good, we'll tell you. Trust us. RICH


House of the Dead is shaping up to be an awesome blaster!

FORUM ROUND-UP

At the end of last year EMAP Images launched their very own web site, the imaginatively titled Game-Online (www.game-online.com). Therein a forum section is contained, allowing users (and occasionally skiving SSM staff) to post messages on a diverse range of topics. Here's what's been going on this month:

I'm pleased about Sega's Katana not being released in Europe until 1999. It means Sega's western divisions no longer have an excuse to dump the Saturn half way through 1998, and also gives more time for software and hardware development on the Dural before it is released. Which should mean it will be cheaper and more powerful than it would be if released this year.

Chris Reed

I just got NiGHTS, (why did I wait so long?) and it is possibly the best game ever. But although I'm having lots of fun with score attacking each of the levels, I really think that a sequel must be made sometime with a bit more to do, more secret modes, some time activated bonuses like Christmas NiGHTS. I don't care if I have to wait for Katana, but it needs expanding.

Steven Scott

You gave Sonic R 93% and I think you should have given it more. It's far better than Sega Rally, that's for sure due to the fact that it is much better graphically, it is easier to learn the handling and the music is ten times better than Rally's - some of the music wouldn't go amiss in the charts. Put simply, Sonic R rules!

Joel Stanier

Why don't Sega of Europe get their act together and release the RPG's the European Saturn owning public demand. The PlayStation gets one good RPG (Final Fantasy VII) and the Saturn has a whopping three, yet Sega won't bring them out. We WANT Grandia. We WANT Panzer Dragoon Saga and we WANT Shining Force 3.

Allen Cook

MSH had better get a release over here soon, no more messing around with release dates. In fact, EVERY future Saturn title that Capcom have confirmed I'm going to get. I just wish that the waiting period in between each release just wouldn't be as vast. Sure, I know they take time to convert, but look at the SF collection! Japan has had it for aaaages now, and we will not get until... who knows when?

Justin Townsend

Time Crisis is certainly not better than Virtua Cop 2. The silly pedal and consequent lack of two-player mode see to that. The PlayStation conversion was a graphical low-res mess. And Sega's House of the Dead beats both of them.

Chris Reed

Q&A

Back from my Christmas holidays and here I am with another edition of Q+A. No more getting up at 9am (putting the coffee machine on and then going back to sleep) and luxurious relaxation. Oh no. It's right back into the thick of it. Oh well. Let's just get on with it. Questions. Interesting ones please to: Q+A Interesting Question Sensation, 37-39 Millharbour, London E14 9TZ. Or email them to ssm.qa@ecm.emap.com. And please: no more questions like "Here is a list of the games I own - what do you think of it?". As if I care!

OI YOU LOT!

Oi you lot at SSM

I am writing this because I need the answers and I want to prove some mentally challenged fools wrong. I think that's a good enough reason for you to print my letter.

1. What is the definition of "bit"?
2. What is a DVD drive?
3. What do NTSC and PAL mean?
4. Why do you lot like beat 'em ups so much?
5. Is this Dural or whatever 64 or 128-bit?
6. Is there an invincibility cheat for Exhumed or not?
7. Are Sony bringing out a competitor for Dural?
8. How long do the lithium batteries in your Saturn last?

P Erson, the World

1. Obvious jokes aside, it's actually a contraction of "binary digit" not that that will have any meaning for you whatsoever. 2. It's a new way of watching movies, like videos or LaserDiscs. DVD means Digital Video Drive. 3. They are the systems used on TVs in the US and Japan (NTSC) and Europe (PAL). NTSC has fewer lines than PAL but updates more quickly. 4. Because. 5. It's neither yet because it doesn't exist. 6. Not that we're aware of - besides, why cheat and ruin one of the Saturn's best games? 7. PlayStation 2 will doubtless materialise at some point. 8. About five years.

WHAT IS YOUR VIEW ON BUYING IMPORT GAMES?

Dear SSM

This is the first time I've wrote to you so could you please print this letter.

1. Will there be a sequel to Athlete Kings (apart from Winter Heat). I think an athletics game with more players to choose from, more events and a four-player option would be a great improvement on Athlete Kings.
2. Will Top Skater be released on the Saturn or even an Extreme Games style game?
3. Will there be a Sonic platform game on the Saturn or on the next Sega system?
4. I'm considering buying a games converter since there is a shop where I live that has a great selection of import titles. What is your view on buying import games?

David Fearn, Derby

1. I think you should be happy enough with Winter Heat to be honest. It's a great game. 2. Top Skater hasn't been confirmed, but I should think that a conversion is fairly likely. 3. There have been no announcements as of yet, but Burning Rangers shows that the Sonic Team are still very much in business. Their recent expansion means more Sonic Team games (hopefully not just for the next machine). 4. Forget converters - ask the shop about having switches fitted to the Saturn. This sorts out poor PAL conversions as well as allowing you to run import titles. As for our view on import titles... well, it's like this. There are a vast number of import-only titles that are never going to get an official release: ThunderForce V, Elevator Action Returns, Metal Slug, King of Fighters 96, MegaMan X4... I could go on. If you want to get the most out of your Saturn (particularly these days when the rate of official releases is slooowing down almost to a standstill), buying import is becoming inevitable.

GRANDIA NOT COMING OUT? NOOOOOOO!

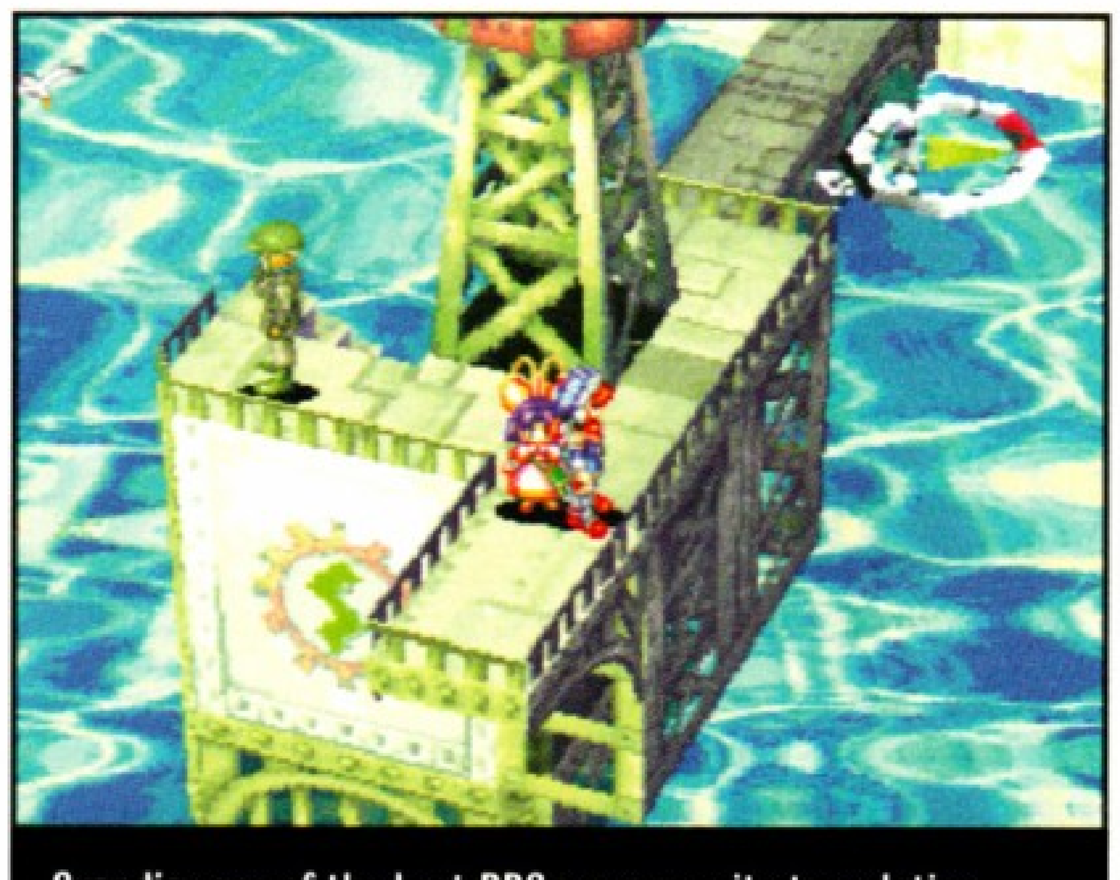
Dear SSM

Please! Please! Answer my questions!

1. I called Sega Europe and they said that Grandia isn't coing out in the UK. Has the world gone mad? Is this true?
2. Is there a date set for Dead or Alive?
3. What do you think of X-Men vs Street Fighter?
4. What are Lobotomy and AM1 (as well as the rest of the AM departments) up to?
5. I have jeard that Saturn Power is coming to an end. Is this true? Let's hope you don't end up the same!

Adrian Batour, St Albans

1. Grandia is the subject of negotiations between Sega Europe and Game Arts as we speak. Basically Sega will have to pay for the translation costs so this may well influence the outcome. We'll be covering the game and providing a walkthrough at some point so even if you buy it on import, you can see all this brilliant game has to offer. Still, Panzer Saga and Shining Force 3 will sort you out quite nicely in the meantime. 2. Not as of yet. Negotiations between Sega



Grandia: one of the best RPGs ever awaits translation.

and Tecmo continue. 3. Bloody excellent. 4. Making games I daresay. The AM departments tend to concentrate on arcade products though - remember that. 5. Although they got more than a little bitter and twisted at the end, Saturn Power's demise was a sad day. They will be missed. Obviously not by us, though.

THAT OLD CHESTNUT

Dear SSM

I've had a Sega now for approximately 19 months. In that time I have not seen or heard of any football management style games. Could you shed some light on the subject?

Michael Ryder, Burnley

Unfortunately, it looks as though this particular style of game won't make it to the Saturn.

DO YOU LIKE MY GAMES COLLECTION? ARGHHH!

Dear SSM

I'm a huge fan of your magazine and read it every month. Please answer the following questions:

1. Does the Sonic Team have any plans after Sonic R?
2. Will there be a Jonah Lomu Rugby 2 with club sides and new tournaments?
3. Have you any codes for Resident Evil or Die Hard Trilogy?
4. How many of the team own N64s or PlayStations?
5. What should I buy: Sega Touring Car, NASCAR 98 or Daytona CCE?
6. Do you like my games collection? Sega Ages, VF2, Rally, Manx TT, Alien Trilogy, Die Hard Trilogy, Hardcore 4x4, Jonah Lomu, Formula Karts, Street Racer, Resident Evil, Sonic R.

Daniel James, Gwent

1. The Sonic Team have MANY plans, starting with Burning Rangers! 2. Not that I know of. 3. If we have they'll be in the Tips Section won't they? 4. N64 and PlayStation: Rich and Matt. PlayStation: Lee. We've ALL got Saturns, obviously. 5. Daytona CCE is probably the best but I'd try getting hold of the original Daytona or WipEout 2097 before going for CCE. 6. It's all right. You're lacking some serious Duke Nukem, Quake, NiGHTS and Exhumed action though. And what about Marvel Super Heroes and Street Fighter Alpha 2?

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions... blah blah blah... most popular queries we've received this month... blahdy blahdy blah... All rounded up and put into one nice question. Blah.

1. Why don't you have more cover CDs?

We're actually putting a huge amount of effort into doing more discs - not just the Sega Flash ones. That's why you've had Christmas NiGHTS a couple of months ago and the frankly awesome Lobotomy collection this ish. And there's more to come, in addition to the ubiquitous Flashes!

2. Is Resident Evil 2 coming to the Saturn?

The PlayStation version is just about finished now and Capcom seem likely to convert it to the Saturn. It's probably going to use the 4MB cart as well, which gives it plenty of potential to severely out-quaff the Sony version?

3. X-Men vs Street Fighter - is it really Saturn exclusive?

Well, Capcom have appeared to sell out. X-Men vs SF will now appear on PlayStation. However, a ton of features (like swapping characters at will) as well as a big amount of animation will be missing. It's going to have to be miraculous to better the Saturn version which is INCREDIBLE!


THEY SAY...
VIDEO GAMES ROT YOUR BRAIN
WE SAY...
LET'S ROT
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SHOWCASE

The heat is On!


After months of hype, SSM has finally managed to get its hands on a nigh-on complete version of Sonic Team's Burning Rangers - and it's incredible! LEE NUTTER takes a closer look.

Prepare to be astonished. Spread across the next eight pages you'll find incredible screen shots and the most in-depth coverage of the biggest game of 1998 - the awe-inspiring Burning Rangers. Granted, fire fighting may not appear to be the stuff a classic videogame is made of. But when you consider Sonic Team's proven track record in producing innovative and visually astounding games, we expect Burning Rangers to be nothing short of a masterpiece. That's why over the next few issues SSM will be breaking Burning Rangers down into manageable chunks, explaining how the game works, showing off the incredible visuals and taking you through each of the huge levels in turn. Rest assured the touch paper has been lit for an explosive adventure!





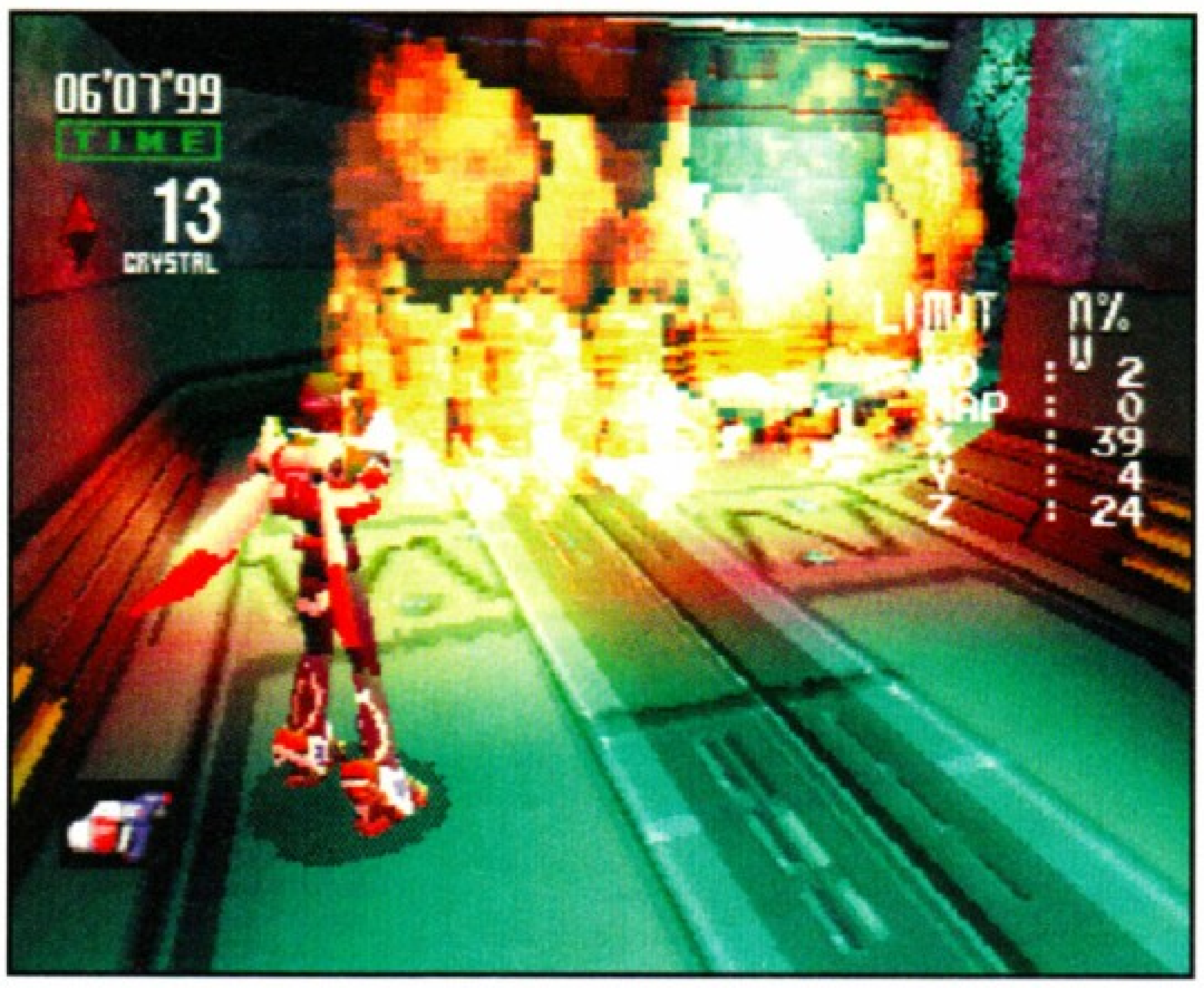
Burning rangers is almost complete and is threatening to be the epoch-making title Saturn owners are longing for.




BURNING RANGERS
03
ICE MAN
BURNING RANGERS
05

As you'd expect, Sonic Team have spent a great deal of time getting the centrepiece fires looking just right.









At the moment only two characters are playable, but we're expecting more in the finished game.

WHAT'S THE STORY?

The Burning Rangers scenario takes place in the distant future at a time when civilisation has progressed considerably from its current primitive state. The huge advances made in technology and building techniques have altered society and its environment beyond all recognition. Ultra-powerful computers and giant mechanical robots are commonplace, serving their human creators to make the common man's life a tad simpler. But as technology rapidly advances, so too the number of disasters, equipment malfunctions and accidents escalate, to the point where normal rescue services prove no longer effective. Enter the Burning Rangers, a highly trained specialist rescue squad who's brief is simply to rescue endangered civilians, even if it means risking their own lives.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Assuming the role of either Lead Phoenix or Tillis (the token female character), players run, jump and glide their way through the demolishing futuristic environments in search of trapped civilians. Each of the superbly crafted 3D levels are absolutely huge, so getting lost would be very easy indeed were it not for the Guidance Communication System. This new innovation allows players to establish contact with the Burning Rangers leader and navigator Chris Parton, who directs them through the complicated maze-like structure whilst belaying information on the hazards within each area. This is also the reason why we don't recommend purchasing an import copy of the game, as the vast amount of Japanese dialogue is an integral part of the of the game.





Once players have successfully negotiated their way through the hazardous corridors and located a trapped civilian, chances are there's a raging fire in the way to thwart the rescue mission. This is where the Burning Rangers' essential Fire Extinguisher Unit comes into play, discharging a beam of varying force depending on the ferocity of the blaze. However, even when the fire has been extinguished, those trapped are unable to be rescued until the Burning Ranger has sufficient crystals to power up the teleporter. The crystals are released as a by-product of dousing the flames and are collected in the familiar Sonic-style.



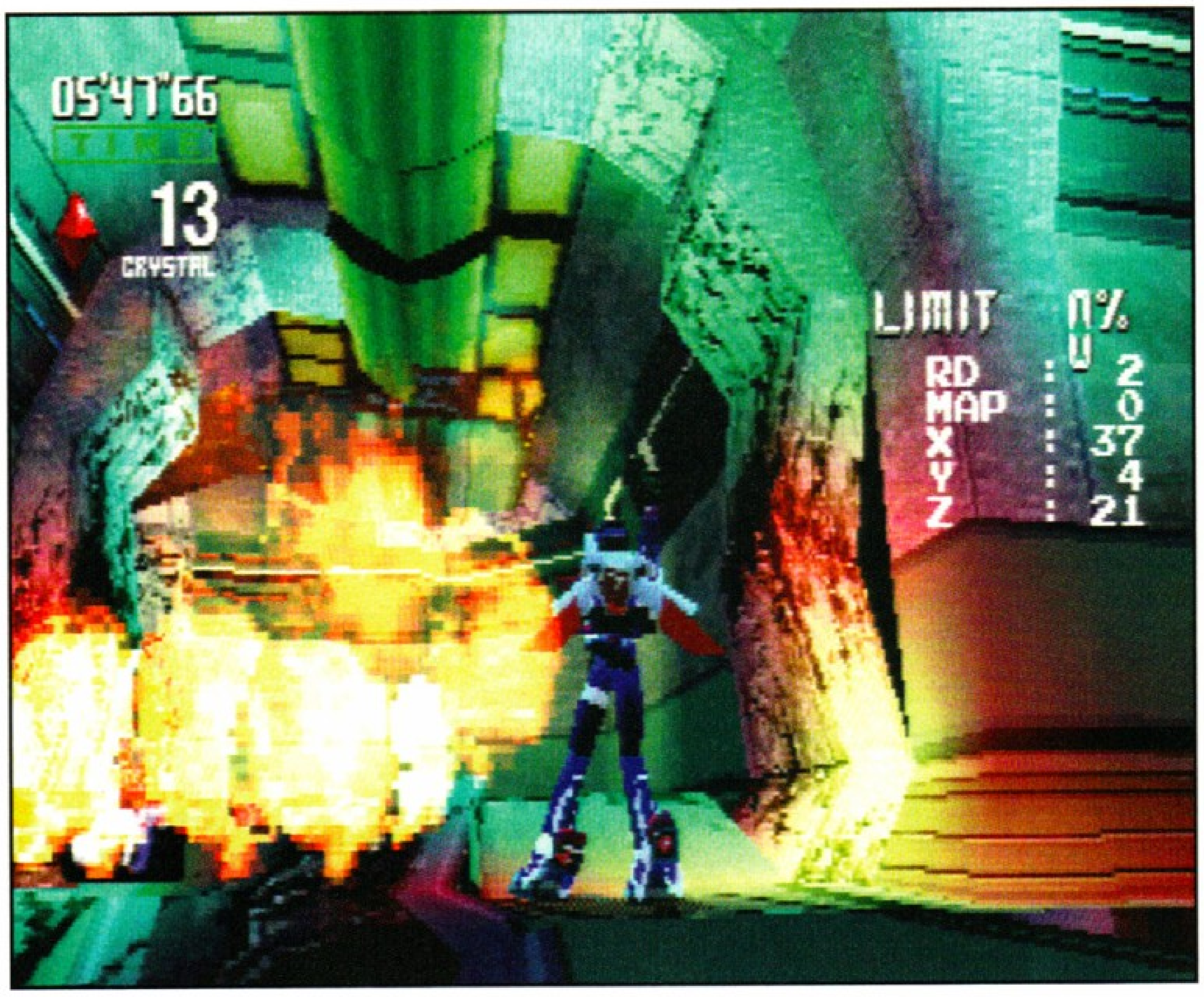


It's hard to believe that Burning Rangers uses the same engine that produced NiGHTS. Erm..... but it does.









The quality of the visuals in Burning Rangers clearly surpasses anything witnessed on the Saturn to date.

Five crystals are required to teleport the rescuee to a place of safety before progressing onto the next danger zone.

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN...

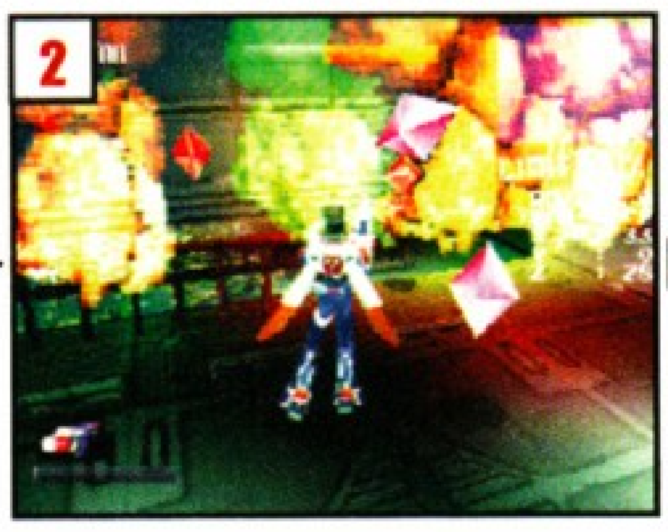
Only it's not quite that simple. You see, certain sections of the vast metallic environments are not accessible until the corresponding key panel has been activated, adding a Tomb Raider-style exploration element to the game. This is made considerable more difficult when the power cuts out, requiring players to search around for the power switch in the dark! But there's little time to stop and think about where to go next, as there's a pressure meter display on the screen which depletes as time goes by. When the meter reaches critical levels, huge flash fires burst through the walls of the volatile structure, requiring players to stay alert to avoid being engulfed in flames.

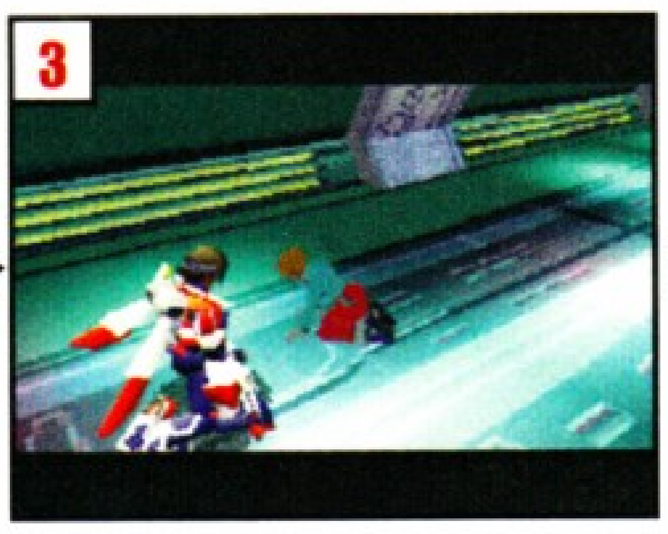
Further hazards await the intrepid Burning Ranger. Each of the massive levels are populated with giant mechanical robots, stomping around in a menacing fashion. These take several well aimed blasts from a fully charged Fire Extinguisher Unit to destroy, leaving much-needed crystals and power-ups in their wake.

As if that wasn't enough to contend with, at the end of each mission players are faced with the daunting prospect of battling a gigantic boss character. These huge monstrosities are pretty tough to destroy, but there's more on that later.

Once the awesome end-of-level boss has been defeated, a NiGHTS-style ranking system evaluates the players progress in terms of time taken to complete the level, number of civilians rescued, crystals collected and fires extinguished. Players who fail to make the appropriate grade will find themselves unable to progress onto the next mission. Bugger.









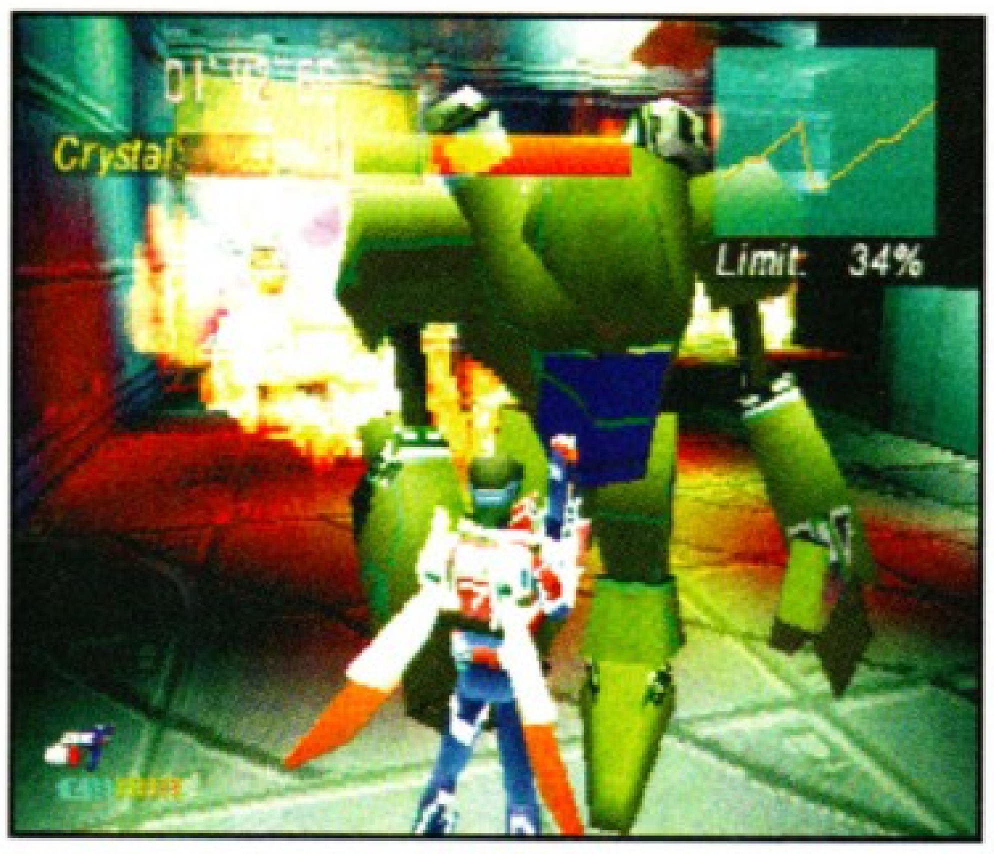


1. Extinguish the ferocious flames... 2. and collect the crystals left behind... 3. enabling you to rescue the terrified civilians... 4. whilst locating key panels to unlock closed areas... 5. and destroying the huge end-of-level boss! Simple.

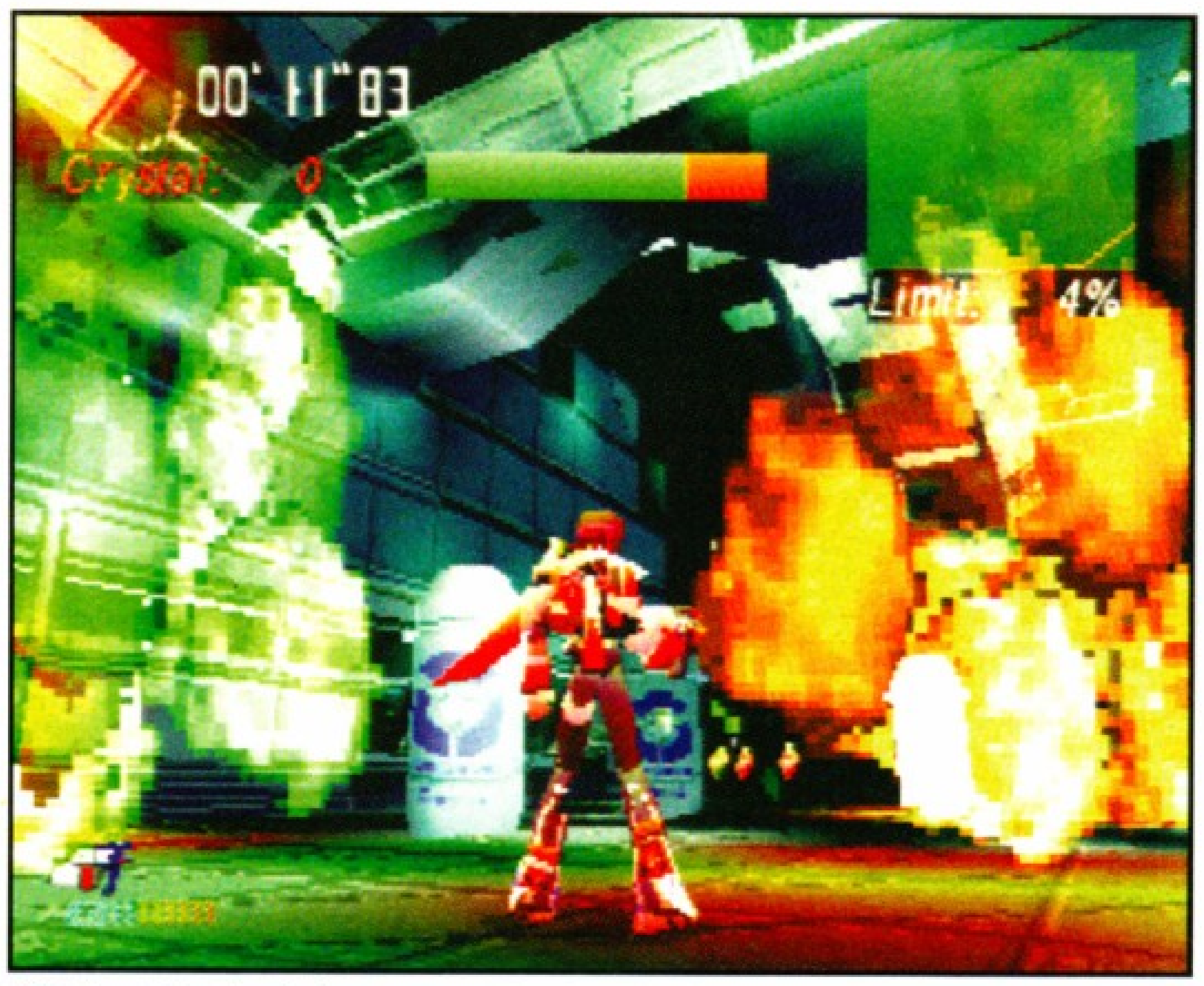






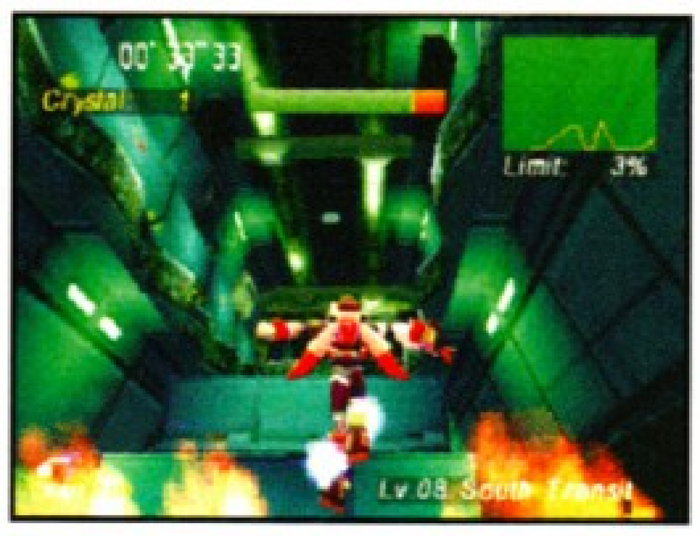



The only form of resistance the Burning Rangers encounter on the first mission are the huge mechanical droids.



Watch out for the fuel storage tanks, 'cos they're gonna blow!






The first level is a tad simplistic, but gives you a vague impression of the delights to follow in later levels.



MISSION 1

The first mission the Burning Rangers encounter is rather more straightforward and on a smaller scale than those which follow, but is mind-bogglingly impressive nevertheless. Split into three huge stages with an enormous boss character in the third, it serves as an introduction to the firey spectacle of the later levels.



The mission kicks in with your Burning Ranger being deployed in the heart of the disaster area, with an enormous fireball explosion demolishing the ground beneath your feet. It soon becomes clear that there'll be no respite, as players advance further into the treacherous level to discover a terror-stricken civilian cowering behind an enormous wall of fire. A liberal blast from the Fire Extinguisher Unit quells the flames, as the rescuee gives horrifying details of the dangers which await you - collapsing bridges, giant mechanical robots, detonating fuel tanks and enormous explosions abound.

As with Sonic Team's awe-inspiring NiGHTS, completing the first mission shouldn't present players with too many problems once they've got to grips with the basics of the game. But the real challenge lies in returning to the first level to complete it with an A grade, which is pretty damn tough.







Along with Panzer, X-Men vs Street Fighter, and House of the Dead, the Saturn has an awesome Easter line-up.

DEMONIC DAFFODIL BOSS ACTION!

Up until the third stage, the Burning Rangers' rescue mission has met with little resistance, but the enormous end-of-level boss soon sets that straight... and then some! The ferocious monstrosity blasts out flaming projectiles from its daffodil-like head, requiring nimble footwork to avoid scattering those valuable crystals. The trick is to keep on the move at all time times, leaping over its firey discharge and relentlessly blasting its head with a fully charged Fire Extinguisher Unit. As with NiGHTS, every second it takes to defeat the boss is deducted from your overall grade. So time is definitely of the essence.









The Japanese release is set for February 23rd – with a PAL translation by April!



Pretty impressive, huh? Well just wait until you see the later levels – they're incredible!

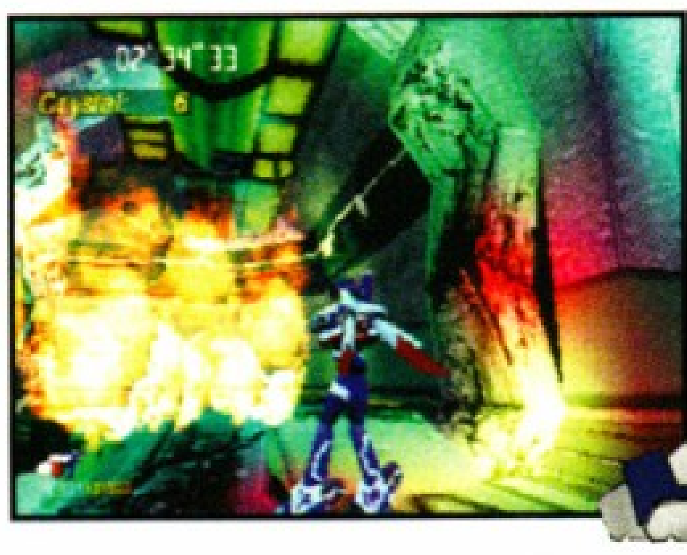




TOO HOT TO HANDLE

You may recall in a previous issue of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE we brought you the exclusive news that Sonic Team had delayed the long-awaited Japanese release of Burning Rangers to redesign certain visual and gameplay aspects they weren't entirely happy with. Well, the fruits of their labour is now clear to see, with Burning Rangers threatening to be the epoch-making title we're all hoping for.

Sonic Team have managed to optimise the proven NiGHTS engine even further, allowing for some incredible architectural structures and vast array of special effects to punctuate the sparse looking metallic environments witnessed in earlier versions. The first stage in particular appears to have benefited from a new lick of paint, with some incredible real-time lighting and translucent effects really pushing the Saturn hardware to its limits. The result is one of the most graphically astounding titles to grace Sega's console to date.

BATTLE OF THE PLANETS

Burning Rangers features an awesome manga-style cartoon intro, reminiscent of the classic eighties Battle of the Planets series. Therein, the complex plot synopsis is revealed, though it's nigh-on impossible to gleam much from the Japanese version we've received. The problem is, given the unpopularity of manga in the western civilisations, such footage is usually removed from American and European releases. But we reckon that it's ace and will be petitioning Sega of Europe to leave the excellent intro intact for the long-awaited PAL translation, which we expect to arrive mid-April.






FRYING TONIGHT

The most common danger faced by the intrepid Burning Ranger is being engulfed in flames as a result of a sudden flash fire. Now you may think that this sounds a tad unfair, but Sonic Team have set in place a couple of subtle warning signs which the alert Burning Ranger should be able to detect before taking aversive action. A split second before a flash fire bursts through the unstable walls, a slight hissing sound is audible and the wall glows red hot. This should afford players sufficient time to back flip out of harms way and let rip with a blast from a fully charged Fire Extinguisher Unit, thus extinguishing the blaze. Cool or what?




The underwater sections are reminiscent of Core's Tomb Raider, but the overall effect is far more impressive.





The range of real-time lighting effects are incredibly spectacular. Oh yes.









By the time you read this, Burning Rangers will be out in Japan! Bet you can't wait to get your hands on it, eh?

SECOND MISSION

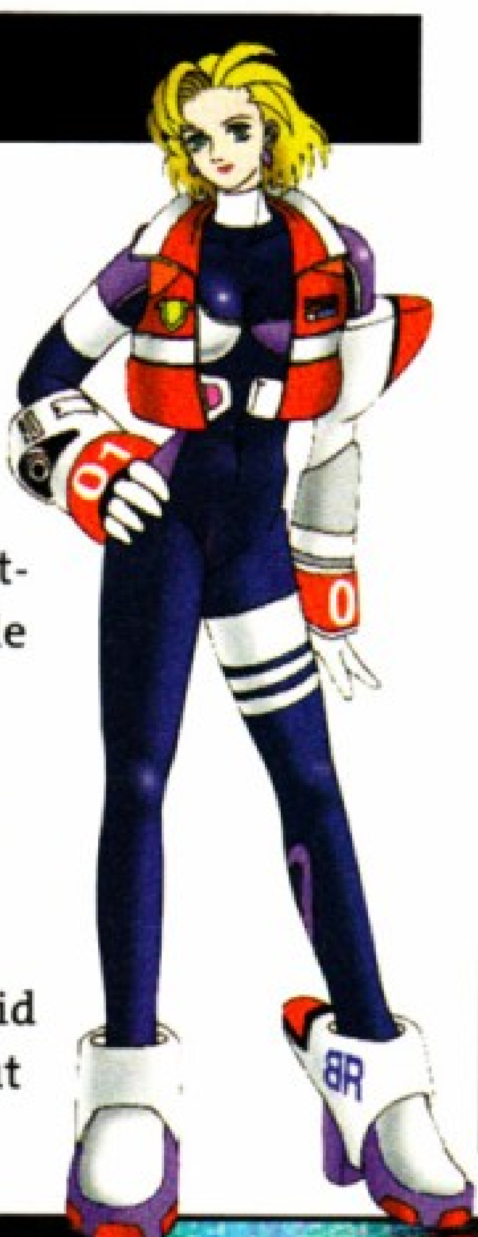
The difficulty setting is taken up a notch for the more demanding second mission, with a diverse range of objectives for the Burning Rangers to carry out. Split into five enormous stages with a gigantic boss character at the end of the fifth, it boasts a stern challenge for even the most competent players.

Entering the level through the submersed tunnel, players are able to sample the Tomb Raider-style swimming sections for the first time. Only the effect is far more impressive than what Core Design achieved with their platform/adventure title, with all manner of marine life populating the watery levels. This gives you a vague impression of what's in store throughout the rest of the second mission, as it soon becomes clear that there's far more to it than rescuing trapped civilians. Later stages require Burning Rangers to participate in airborne battles with Virtual On-style robots, rescue trapped dolphins, swim with marine life and destroy the huge piranha fish boss!

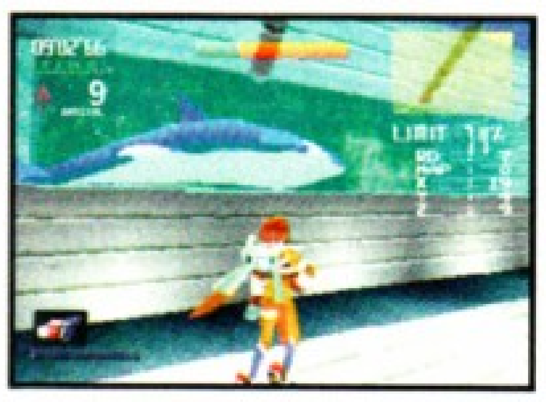
However, the downside of the second mission is that it's

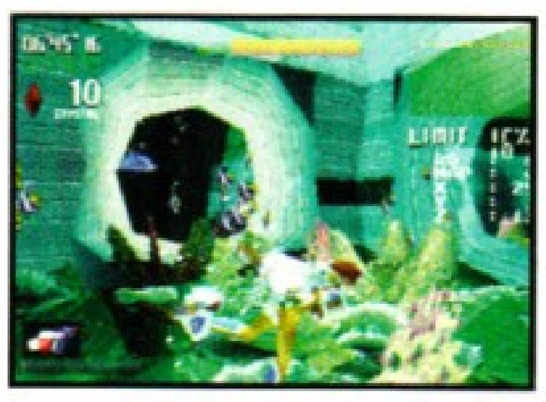
SMELLS A BIT FISHY

The second end-of-level boss the Burning Rangers encounter is similarly as huge as the first, but requires players to employ very different tactics to successfully defeat it. The gigantic mechanical fish circulates around its watery domain, relentlessly firing off round after round of missile projectiles. Get hit by one of those suckas and you can kiss goodbye to those hard-earned crystals. So the best approach is to swim into its path, letting rip with a fully charged beam from the Fire Extinguisher Unit before leaping out of the water to avoid its retaliation. It sounds simple enough, but in practice it is very tough indeed.





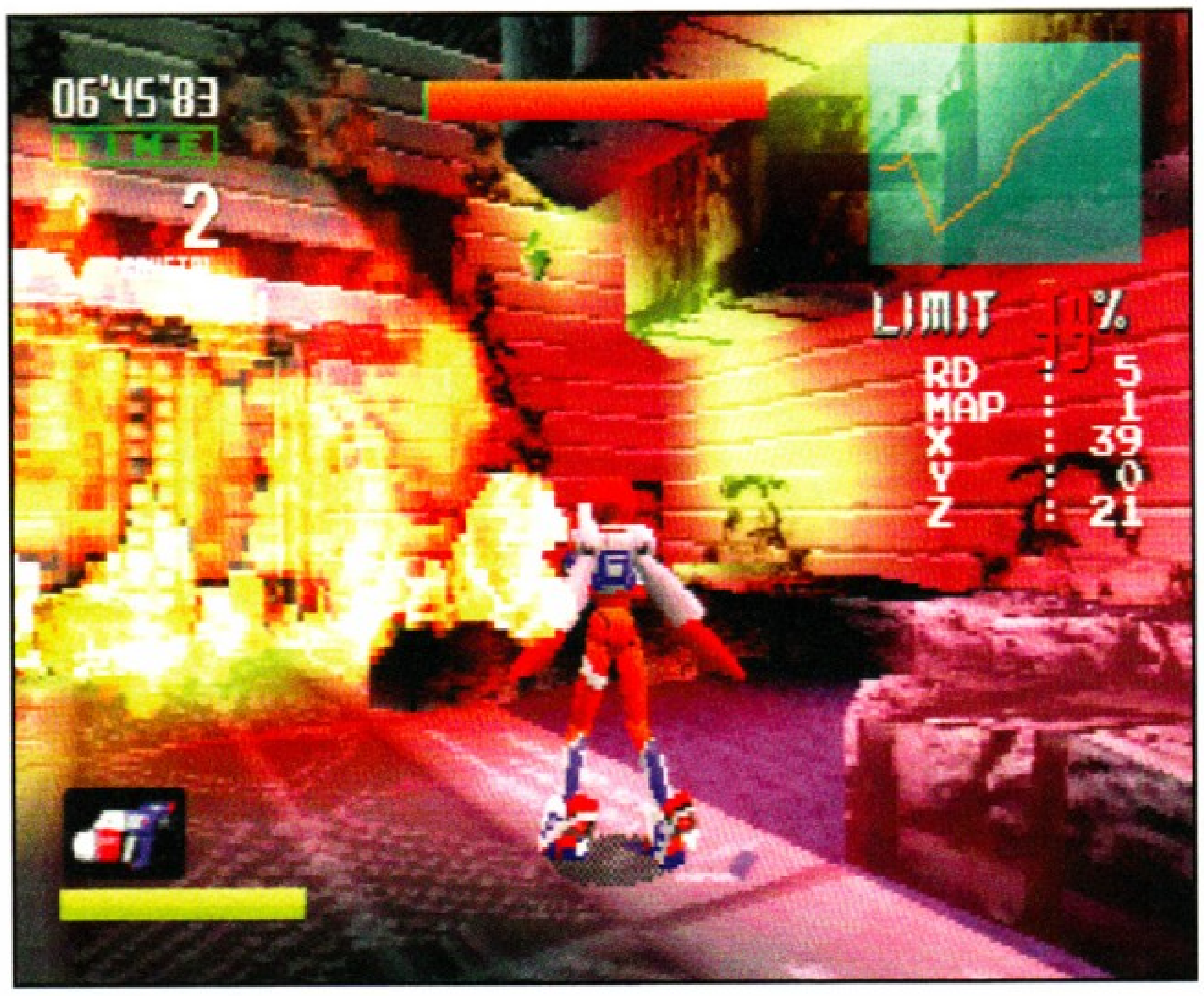














And they said the Saturn couldn't do transparencies.

rock-solid. Negotiating your way around the maze-like aquatic environments really gets those brain cells working (though I dare say it will be significantly simpler with English dialogue).

HOT STUFF

The second mission is perhaps the best indication of Sonic Team's unrivalled coding expertise, creating a believable and totally immersive 3D environment. Each of the stages feature some intricate and visually astounding level design, with Sonic Team pulling out all the stops to create some incredible set-pieces the likes of which Saturn owners have never seen before. Notable examples include the incredible translucent water tanks replete with superbly animated marine life, providing a stark contrast to the metallic environments of the previous mission. Or the astonishing translucent tunnel sections coupled with some incredible dynamic lighting effects and enormous explosions which never fail to impress. Put simply - you won't believe your eyes. And they said Tomb Raider 2 couldn't be done on the Saturn. Bah!

MORE NEXT MONTH!

We've barely been able to scratch the surface of what the incredible Burning Rangers has to offer, so we'll be continuing apace with our unrivalled coverage in the very next issue of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE. We'll be turning our attention to the gob-smacking third and fourth missions, besides revealing all the latest on the cool two-player, sub-game and training modes! Be sure not to miss it.



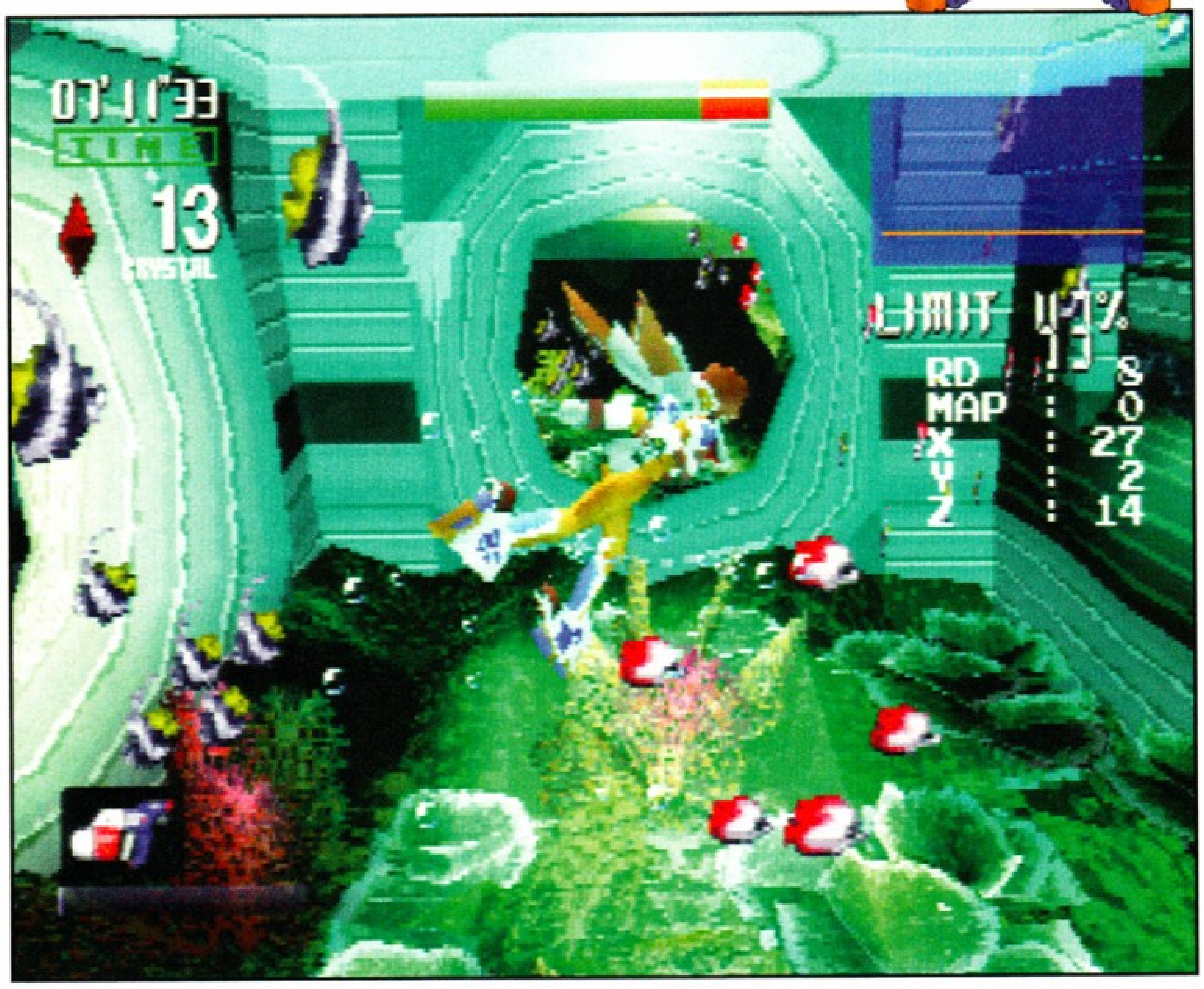




TAKE TO THE SKIES

What makes Burning Rangers such a joy to play is clearly the versatility of its two main characters - Lead Phoenix and Tillis. Strapped into their ultra-powerful Burneer Unit (a jet pack, if you like), the characters control like a cross between Lara Croft and NiGHTS. Jumps, rolls, somersaults and back flips are amongst their sizable repertoire of acrobatic manoeuvres designed to evade the ferocious flames. But whilst the Burneer Unit doesn't enable Rangers to fly, they are afforded a certain degree of manoeuvrability in the air to enable them to perform landings with pinpoint precision. Cool, eh?





In next month's issue we'll have hod-loads of Burning Rangers coverage and an exclusive Sonic Team interview.



ISSUE #1 NOV 95
Epoch-making First Issue of SSM with awesome video! Reviews: Clockwork Knight 2, Sim City 2000, Theme Park, Street Fighter the Movie, NBA Jam TE, Robotica, NHL Hockey, Rayman, World Series Baseball. Showcases: Virtua Fighter 2, Sega Rally, Virtua Cop!



ISSUE #2 DEC 95
Reviewed: Virtua Fighter 2, Virtua Cop, Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2, Hi-Octane, Victory Boxing, Golden Axe: The Duel, Mansion of Hidden Souls, Hebereke's Popoito, CyberSpeedway. Showcased: Virtua Fighter 2, Firestorm, X-Men: Children of the Atom.



ISSUE #3 JAN 96
Reviewed: Sega Rally, F1 Live Information, Galactic Attack, Mystaria, Worms, Virtua Racing, Off-World Interceptor. Showcases: Guardian Heroes, Mystaria, FIFA '96... plus all the secrets of Virtua Cop! Plus ultimate Sega Rally coverage... the BEST racing game!



ISSUE #4 FEB 96
Reviewed: Wing Arms, FIFA '96, Virtual Golf, Johnny Bazookatone, Toshinden, Cyberia, Casper, D, True Pinball, World Cup Golf. Showcases: Vampire Hunter/Street Fighter Alpha, D and all the secret cheats of Sega Rally! Plus Panzer Zwei AND part one of the VF2 Masterclass!



ISSUE #5 MAR 96
Reviewed: X-Men: Children of the Atom, Darius, Baku Baku Animal, NFL Quarterback Club, Hang On '96, Titan Wars. Showcases: Euro '96, Legend of Thor, Street Fighter Alpha, X-Men, Guardian Heroes, Panzer Zwei! Plus: VF2 masterclass and Sega Rally guide!



ISSUE #6 APR 96
Reviewed: WipEout, Magic Carpet, Street Fighter Alpha, Shellshock, Valora Valley Golf, Shining Wisdom, Gex. Showcases: Magic Carpet, Gun Griffon, MK3, Panzer Zwei, DarkStalkers/Vampire Hunter. Plus: VF2 Masterclass part three AND a cool WipEout guide.



ISSUE #8 JUN 96
Heart of Darkness featured... and it's still not out! Reviewed:Guardian Heroes, Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3, In the Hunt, Discworld, 3D Lemmings. Showcases: Panzer Zwei final, NiGHTS, Guardian Heroes final update. Full detailage on top games still worth buying today!



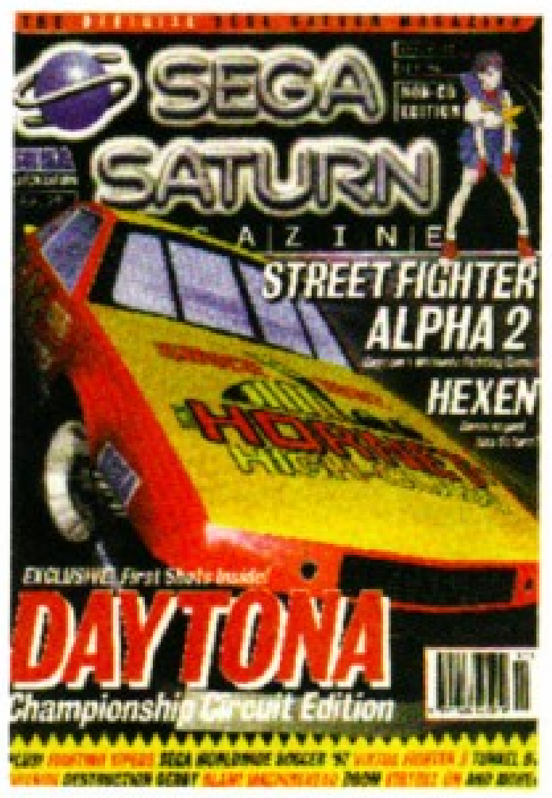
ISSUE #9 JUL 96
Full E3 report with first Cop 2 coverage! Reviewed: Loaded, Need for Speed, Shockwave Assault, Big Hurt Baseball, Blackfire, WWF, Striker, Virtual Open Tennis, Ghen War. Showcases: Sonic X-Treme (now canned!), VF Kids, Exhumed, Space Hulk and of course NiGHTS!



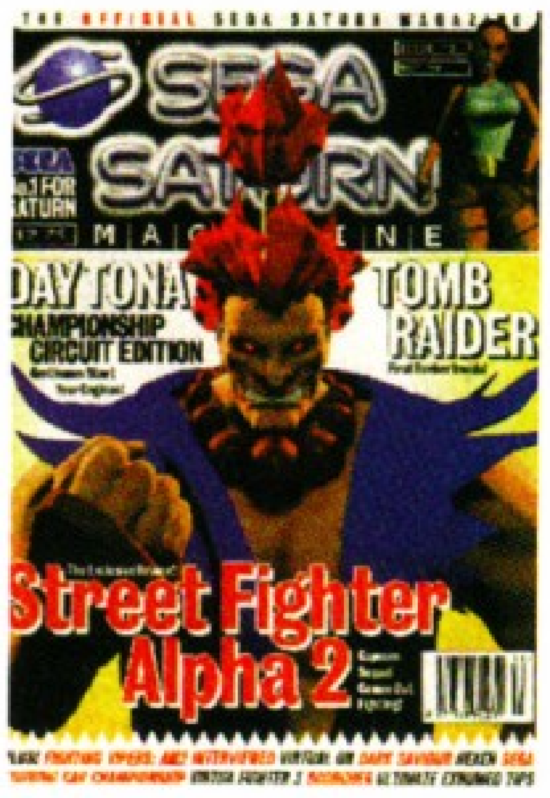
ISSUE #10 AUG 96
NiGHTS: Sonic Team's amazing game finally arrives! Reviewed: NiGHTS, Road Rash, Primal Rage, Slam and Jam, Starfighter 3000, Olympic Football, Sea Bass Fishing, Pro Pinball. Showcases: Athlete Kings, VF Kids, Alien Trilogy. Also: Guardian Heroes Tips!



ISSUE #11 SEP 96
Amazing Candy Fighting Vipers Cover! Reviewed: VF Kids, Alien Trilogy, Athlete Kings, Exhumed, NBA Action, Space Hulk, Keio Flying Squadron, Bust-A-Move, Story of Thor, PowerPlay Hockey. Showcases: Sega Ages, Cop 2, Soviet Strike. Plus: Shining Wisdom tips



ISSUE #12 OCT 96
Daytona CCE revealed! Reviewed: WorldWide Soccer '97, Fighting Vipers, Actua Golf, Destruction Derby, Blam! Machinehead, Bubble Bobble Pack, Highway 2000. Also included: Awesome NiGHTS guide that will blow you away. And! The dread arrival of The Master!



ISSUE #13 NOV 96
Amazing Street Fighter Alpha 2 coverage! Reviewed: Street Fighter Alpha 2, World Series Baseball 2, Tomb Raider, Earthworm Jim 2, Impact Racing. Showcases: Vipers part 2 plus programmer interview, Tomb Raider. Plus: tips to get you all the way through Exhumed!



ISSUE #15 JAN 97
COVER CD WITH VIRTUAL ON, DAYTONA CCE, WORLDWIDE SOCCER, TOMB RAIDER! Reviewed: Virtual On, Blast Chamber, NHL Hockey '97, Command and Conquer, Sega Ages, Mighty Hits, Tetris Plus, Breakpoint, Krazy Ivan, Tunnel B1, Madden '97, Jewels of the Oracle.



ISSUE #16 FEB 97
Amazing Fighters MegaMix Coverage! 16 pages of small tips - it's all in here! Reviewed: Sonic 3D Blast, NFL Quarterback Club '97, NBA Jam Extreme, Toshinden URA, Tempest 2000, Batman Forever, Bug Too!, Dark Savior. Showcases: Bug Too! Tomb Raider guide part one!



ISSUE #17 MAR 97
Manx TT Exclusively Revealed! Reviewed: Die Hard Arcade, Crusader, Hexen, Die Hard Trilogy, Grid Run, Andretti Racing, Tilt, Soviet Strike. Showcases: Hexen, Soviet Strike, Fighters MegaMix, Die Hard Arcade. Tips: Tomb Raider part two. Exhumed Team Dolls!



ISSUE #18 APR 97
Duke Nukem 3D - First report and interview! Reviewed: Manx TT SuperBike, Area 51, Incredible Hulk, Norse by Norsewest, Iron Man/XO Manowar, Mass Destruction, Spot Goes To Hollywood! Tips: Die Hard Trilogy part one, Dark Savior, Tomb Raider conclusion!



ISSUE #19 MAY 97
HUGELY IMPRESSIVE CD! Plus: Quake interview! Reviewed: Bomberman, Crypt Killer, FIFA 97, NBA Live 97, Dragonheart, Swagman, Puzzle Fighter, Space Jam, Return Fire, Black Dawn, Torico. Tips: Fighters MegaMix part one, Die Hard Trilogy part two and Soviet Strike!



ISSUE #20 JUN 97
Last Bronx Revealed! More Quake! Reviewed: Fighters MegaMix, King of Fighters 95, Pandemonium, Mr Bones, Mechwarrior 2, Scorcher, Shining the Holy Ark. Showcases: Pandemonium, Mechwarrior 2, Shining Holy Ark! Tips: MegaMix, Die Hard part three, Hexen part one.



ISSUE #22 AUG 97
Sonic R revealed! Special E3 Report! Reviewed: Sonic Jam, Dark Light Conflict, Dragon Force, WipEout 2097. Previews: Quake, Marvel Super Heroes! Showcased: Dragon Force, Last Bronx, WipEout 2097, Enormous Resident Evil guide! Tips: Hexen Final Part, Shining the Holy Ark Part 2.



ISSUE #23 SEPT 97
Marvel Super Heroes exclusive! Reviewed: Resident Evil, Warcraft II, Williams' Greatest Hits, Discworld 2. Previews: Touring Car, Grandia, Croc, Salamander Deluxe Pack! Showcased: Marvel Super Heroes, Resident Evil, ThunderForce V, Last Bronx. House of the Dead Interview. Final Shining the Holy Ark guide!



ISSUE #24 OCT 97
Panzer Dragoon Saga exposed! Reviews: Duke Nukem 3D, Last Bronx, Marvel Super Heroes and Frankenstein. Previews: SWWS '98, Quake and Formula Karts. Showcased: Croc, Duke Nukem 3D and Marvel Super Heroes. Coming Soon: Sonic R, Silhouette Mirage. Plus Last Bronx, Resident Evil and Wipeout guides!



ISSUE #25 NOV 97
Sonic R Mega Report! Reviews: Worldwide Soccer '98, John Madden '98, Street Fighter Collection and Bust-A-Move 3. Showcases: Quake, Touring Car plus mega Lobotomy Interview and DeathTank revealed for the first time! Tips: Resident Evil part two, Last Bronx part two and Marvel Super *Villains*!



ISSUE #26 DEC 97
MEGA CHRISTMAS NiGHTS CD WITH THIS ISSUE! Plus: Dead or Alive! Reviewed: Sonic R, Formula Karts, Sega Touring Car, Enemy Zero, Croc, Trash It, Mortal Kombat Trilogy, The Lost World, Quake! Huge guides on Duke Nukem 3D (part 1) and Marvel Super Heroes (part 1). An issue you MUST NOT MIS

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ISSUE #14 DEC 96
World's First Virtua Cop 2 Review! Also reviewed: Daytona CCE, Amok, Street Racer, Hardcore 4x4, Chaos Control, Three Dirty Dwarves, Blazing Dragons, Crimewave, PGA Golf '97. Showcases: Cop 2, Christmas NiGHTS, Daytona CCE. Lobotomy Software interviewed!



ISSUE #21 JUL 97
WipEout 2097! Resident Evil/ Marvel Super Heroes exclusive! Reviewed: Jonah Lomu Rugby, Battlestations, ID4, Actua Soccer Club Edition, The Crow. Double AM3 interviews: arcade Top Skater, Last Bronx! Tips: Shining Holy Ark part one, MegaMix part three, Hexen part two!



ISSUE #27 JAN 98
AWESOME SEGA FLASH #6 WITH THIS ISSUE! Plus: House of the Dead and X-Men vs Street Fighter revealed! Previews: Astra Super Stars, Rampage World Tour, Layer Section, Zero Divide! Reviewed: Steep Slope Sliders, Maximum Force, NASCAR 98! Tipped: Sonic R, Marvel Super Heroes part two, Duke Nukem 3D part two!

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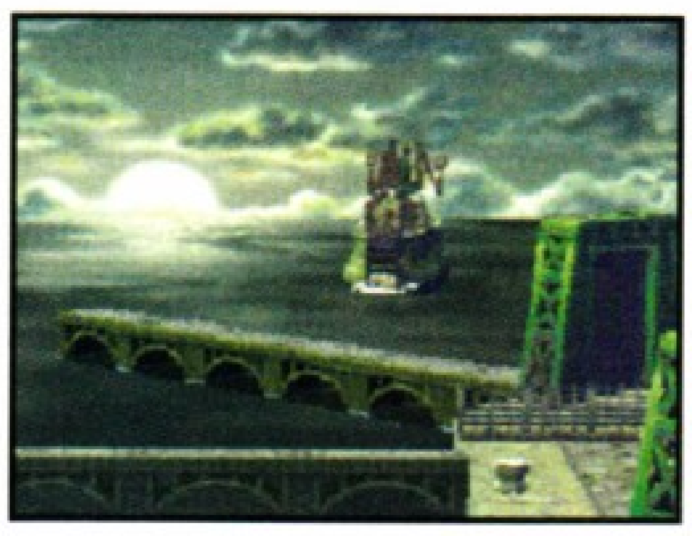
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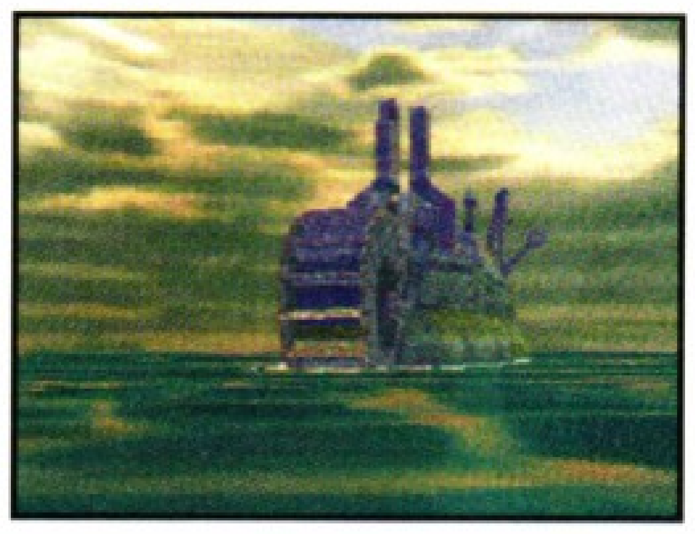
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A Grandia day out!

Japanese gamers are thrilling to the greatest RPG ever! The Saturn's answer to the mighty Final Fantasy VII has finally been released and unbelievably it looks as though it will never appear in the UK! So is Grandia as amazing as it's cracked up to be? RICH LEADBETTER tells it like it is.

Much has been said about GameArts' Grandia. Some have hailed it as the most phenomenal role- playing game ever devised. Some have even said that it's superior to SquareSoft's PlayStation classic Final Fantasy VII. Upon loading the game it's very clear to me that this software is very Special. With the stunning streamed video intro, orchestral soundtrack and untouchable graphics engine, it's clear that Grandia is by far and away the most sophisticated adventure on the Saturn. And speaking as someone who's also played the awe-inspiring Panzer Dragoon Saga, this is high





praise indeed. Over the course of these six pages, I'll be showing you what I've been up to in the amazing world of Grandia and I guarantee you adventure and spectacle on a level the Saturn (or any other console) has yet to see!



This realtime 3D townscape is a spectacular exercise in graphics technology!

IMPORT ACTION

Cool eh? Well no. Grandia is a Japanese adventure with huge amounts of text. I'm talking MASSIVE swathes of text from even the most insignificant of characters. That being the case, it looks as though the Greatest Adventure Ever is destined never to be translated into English due to the phenomenal costs involved. That means that the only way you'll get to experience the wonder of Grandia is to buy an import copy and miss out on the story (unless you read Japanese of course).

This must rank as one of the biggest disappointments long-suffering Saturn owners have had to deal with. Although a translation hasn't been completely ruled out by Sega, with each passing day it seems more unlikely.





The ruins offer plenty of intrigue (right) and white knuckle excitement (left).

HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL



But there is a ray of hope. SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE will, over the next few months, be providing a step-by-step guide to this incredible game. You might not be able to follow the story, but where it counts we'll be there with the info needed to get you through the game (and what an incredible game it is!) So in the midst of tragedy there is still hope.

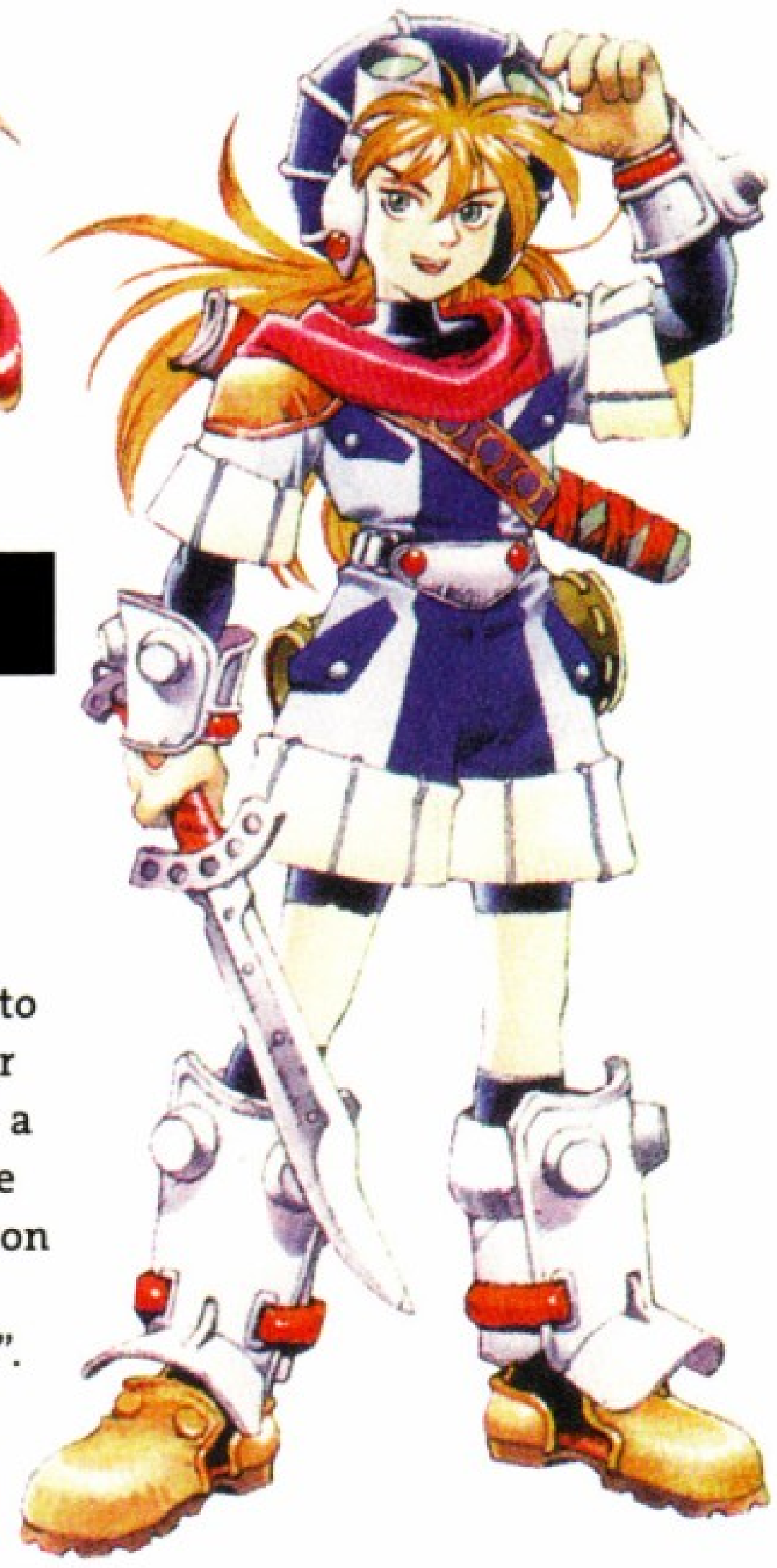
Cunning translation of the Grandia plot allows us to at least tell you the background to the game and reveal the identity of the main protagonists. If you're expecting to play this game as same kind of battle-hardened warrior of extraordinary physical prowess, you're in for a disappointment.

Your main character is Justin, a 14-year-old punk kid from the streets of Parm - a town that's slowly entering the Industrial Age. One day, whilst loitering around the ruins of Saruto, a mystical stone given him by his lost father suddenly comes to life in Justin's hands. He has been called to arms in an epic quest that will take him across the world! It's a journey he might not survive... But still, enough of the story - let's get on with the game itself!



JUSTIN

Age: 14
Height: 155cm
Weight: 47kg
A young, headstrong lad with an adventurous spirit, Justin yearns to follow in his father's footsteps and explore the world (and we'll put good money on him actually finding his dear old pappie at the end of the game). And to coin a phrase, "that's you, that is."



FINA

Age: 15
Height: 160cm
Weight: 47kg
She's pretty and very popular indeed - which could be down to her status as a leading member of the adventurer's guild. She's a proven fighter, although by the time Justin meets up with her on the boat to New Parm, he's almost as "tasty" in a "rumble".

SUE

Age: 8
Height: 120cm
Weight: 28kg
Accompanied by her ever-present pet, Pooi, Sue sees herself as the guardian angel of Justin... and indeed, what she lacks in combat capabilities is more than made up for with her healing powers and comedy value. She's pretty much with you for the entire game.





RIIN

Age: 15
Height: 160cm
Weight: 47kg
This young lady is in Meulen's army and is possessed of a pleasant and charming personality. She's also a kick-ass warrior to boot... it wouldn't surprise us in the least to see her join Justin's band of adventurers in the later stages of the game...



MEULEN

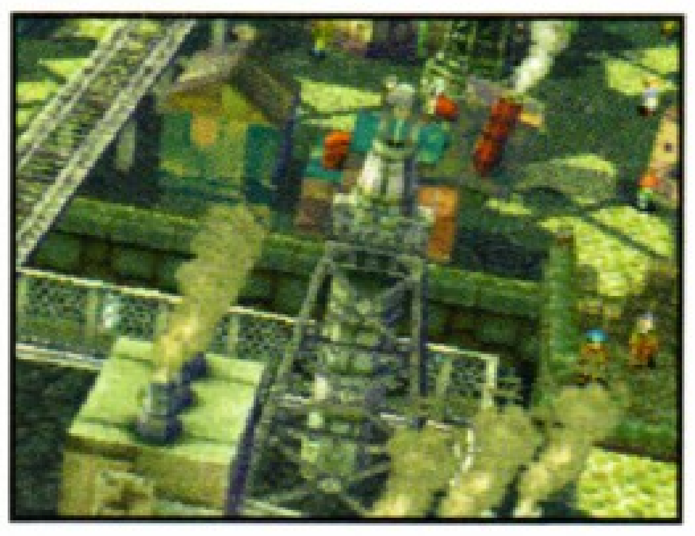
Age: 23
Height: 180cm
Weight: 70kg
This extremely handsome warrior turns up from time to time and although it seems as though he has a good heart, he actually seems cause plenty of problems for Justin and his band. You first meet him at the Sabuto ruins where he acts in a most threatening manner...



After you've braved the oceans and looted a ghost ship, you reach New Parm!



The graphics used to depict New Parm are pretty awesome, yes?









HERE'S THE DEAL

So what's this Grandia business all about? Disregarding the albeit impressive full-motion video bits what do you actually have to DO? These two pages are where you find out...

TOWN AND COUNTRY

The real adventuring in Grandia takes place in the cities. These are graphically intensive areas that really show off the true power of the 3D engine in the game. These visuals are truly lush, with every tiny detail animated to a ridiculous degree... and unlike Final Fantasy VII, everything is fully rendered in 3D. You can use the shoulder buttons on the joypad to rotate the view however you wish (so you can see behind buildings the view obscures, for example), such is the power of Grandia's engine.



In these sections of the game you get the most in terms of plot exposition and character interaction. That being the case, it's these sections of the game that cause us gaijin barbarians the most problems, since we don't have a clue what any one is saying!

FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

The fighting sections of Grandia are the areas where all your tactical prowess needs to be brought to the fore. As with the majority of RPGs, successful battles leads to extra experi-





The fighting in Grandia is pretty tactical but played at a breakneck speed!



Each major section of the game presents a boss to defeat... the Ghost Ship pits you against this giant squid! Lop off its limbs then go in for the kill!









Very little Japanese makes the fight sections in Grandia very easy to work out.





ence points. These in turn give you more levels and a more powerful band of characters. You also glean gold coins from the melee, which are useful for buying new weapons and armour. Language problems? What language problems? A bit of trial and error and you'll soon be cleaving skulls, slinging spells (but hopefully you won't be using the white flag icon too often!)



ON THE FIELD

Us UK non-Jap-speaking gamers are going to get the most out of the field sections of Grandia. In these areas, plot progression takes a back seat to exploration, gold collection, mystical item action and some hardcore fighting! The key to all of these stages is very straightforward. Kill everything that moves to get more levels for your characters, loot the stage for objects and gold, then move on to the next stage. At the end you face a boss creature of some description. As you might imagine, the idea here is to butcher the monstrosity like a stinking pig. Preferably without suffering the same fate yourself...



The translucent misting effects on the high seas are most excellent indeed.







Exploration and simple logic puzzles are the name...



... of the game in the Field sections of Grandia!



When dawn breaks over the Parm docks you get this awesome lighting effect...

BREAKING THE LANGUAGE BARRIER!

We can picture the scene: hugely impressed with the SSM coverage of Grandia you "do the deed" and go out and buy the game on import. You might not know what's going on, but the initial full- motion video intro and panoramic views are amazing. And then - finally! - into the game proper. And, er, you can't get out of the first town! Yes, it's a problem and even SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, with all its power, had problems. So just to get you on your way, here's a nice round- up of what you actually have to do in the town of Parm...





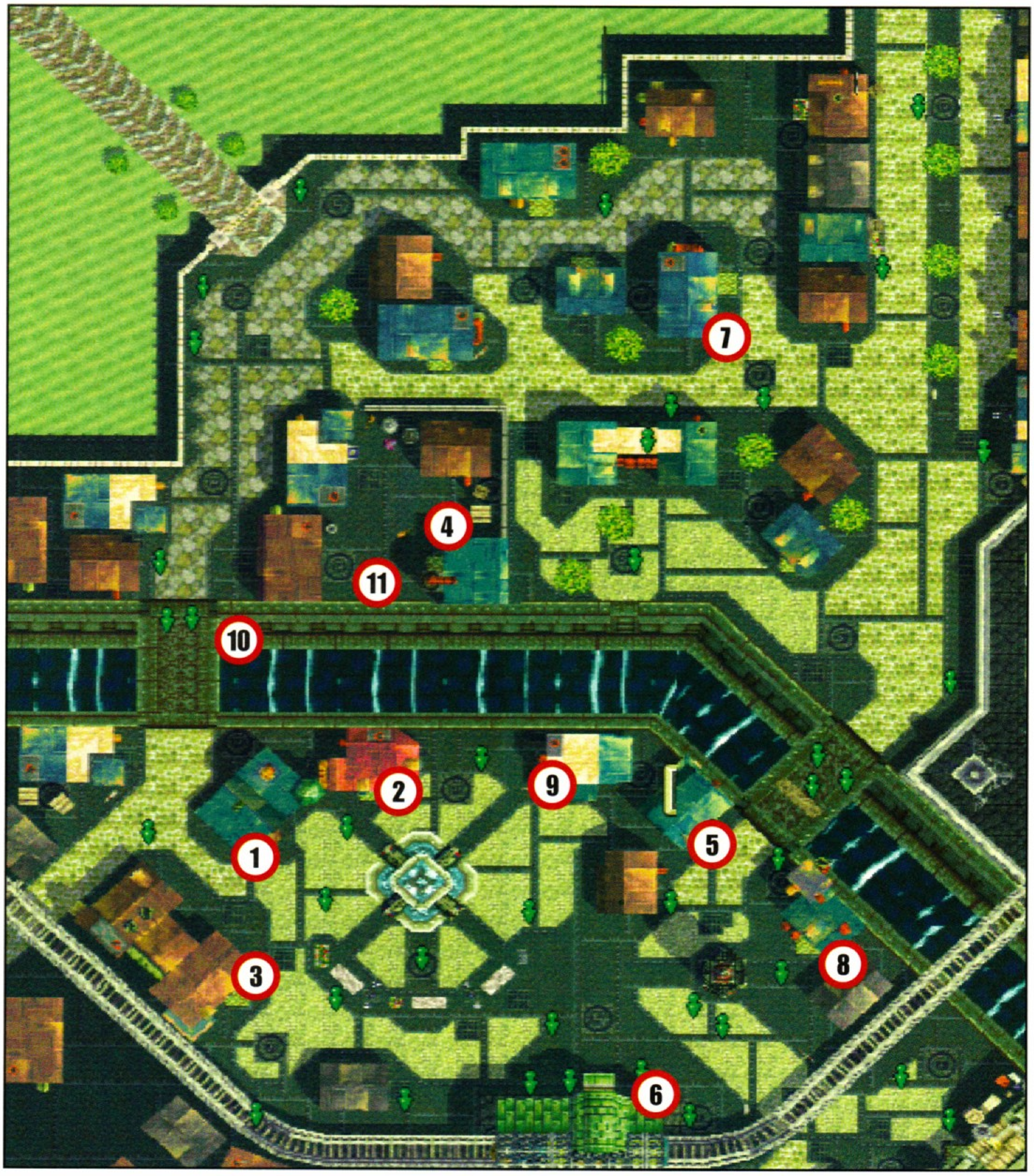


How do you get off the ship? Full answers in next month's SSM!

THE TOWN OF PARM

See this map? It's an overhead representation of Parm, the first town you visit in the epic world of Grandia. As you might imagine, those green, people-shaped icons represent, er, people. Anything else is on the key to the map!

1. Lily's Tavern
2. Sue's House
3. The Museum
4. Underground Tavern
5. Blue Marlin Cafe
6. Parm Train Station
7. Gants' House
8. Steam House
9. Shop
10. Second Treasure
11. Where Tents loses his keys



The field sections are where we're going to have the most fun! Battles aplenty!



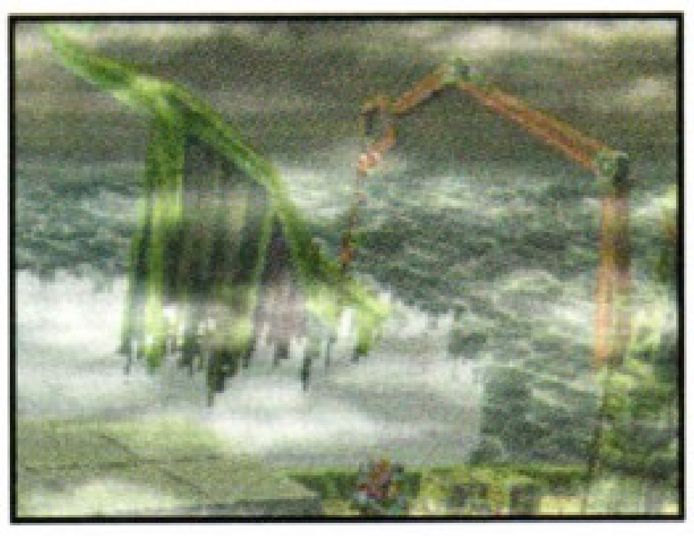


AT THE DOCKS

The docks are due north of Parm... it's your eventual aim to come here and book passage on a departing liner. But that's a lot further into the game. In the short term, collecting the first treasure and looking through a telescope are the biggest thrills on offer here.

1. The First Treasure
2. The Telescope





(left) Once you've looted the Ghost Ship and defeated its giant squid-like boss, the vessel capsizes and vanishes beneath the waves in an excellent set-piece.

1. THE FIRST TREASURE

Try to leave Parm via the bridge to the south east. A bunch of punks stop you - basically you need three treasures to pass. Go north into the docks. Around the corner is the first treasure, a shield. Got that? Good - only two more to go!

2. THE SECOND TREASURE

The second treasure is almost as easy to find as the first! The canal that divides Parm into north and south has a small ladder leading down to a ledge along the bank of the water. The second treasure is located on this bank...











3. TALK TO EVERYONE!

Getting the last treasure is problematic because the kid Tents has hidden it in a chest in Gants' house! Go to Gants' house and talk to her, then go to the tavern (you should pass Tents who goads you then runs off). Now locate the kid who runs away when you talk to him a couple of times (he looks similar to Tents actually). Eventually you chase him all the way to the top of the map where he hides near a tree. Now go talk to the punks at the bridge again.





4. TENTS' KEY LOSS DEBACLE

Talking to the bridge militia should trigger Tents to lose his keys! He's up near the tavern. Talk to him and when you get a choice of what to say next, go for the bottom option. You've just agreed to find his keys for him. Go south and you'll start to crawl. The location of the keys is on the map. Now go back to Gants' house, talk to Tents, go in and open the chest! You get a nice sword (don't forget to equip it!).





5. INTO THE SOUTH SIDE!

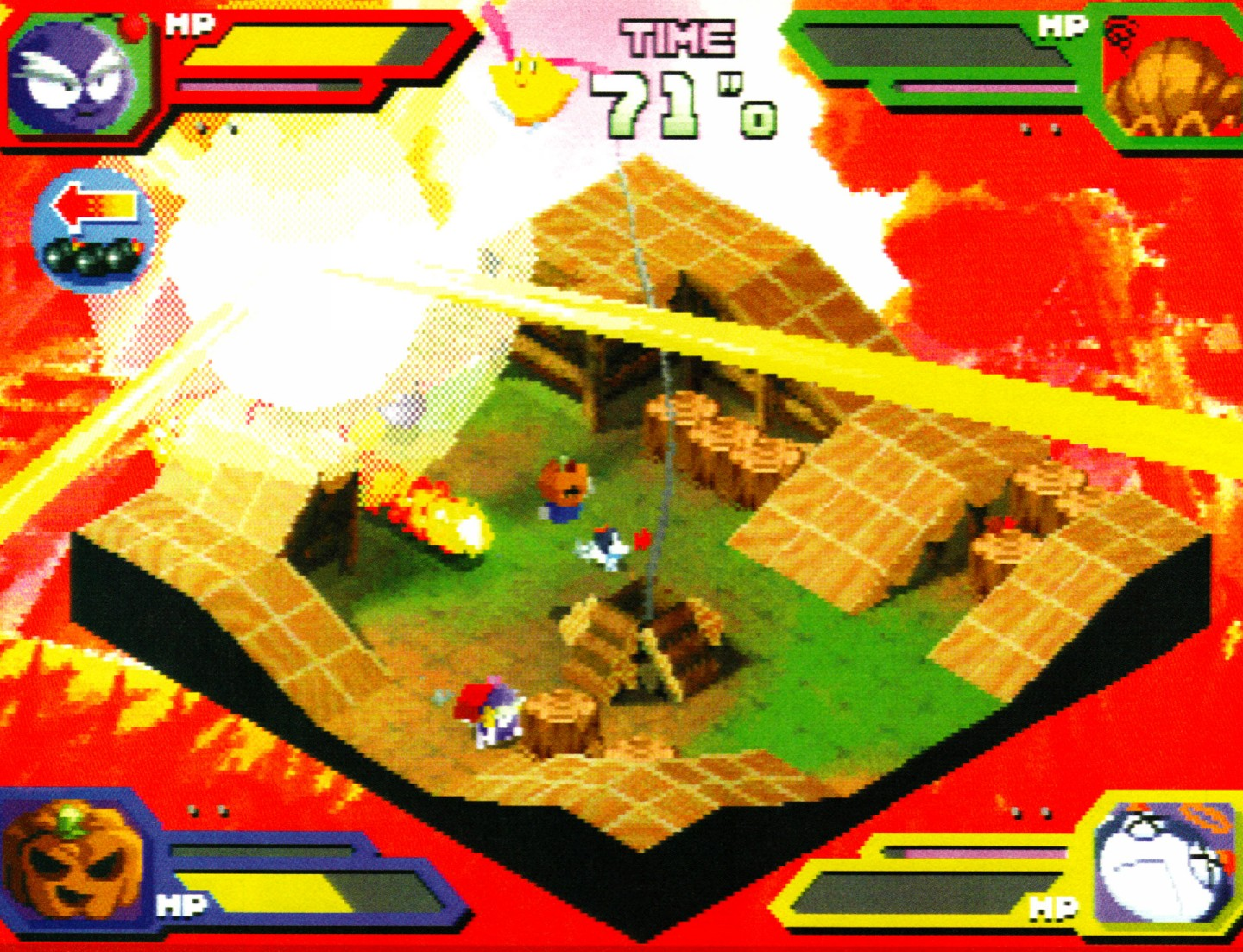
Now you have all three treasures, you'll find that the bully boys on the bridge have moved away... try to sneak by! You'll immediately rush into Lily's house. Talk to Lily (she's behind the bar), get thwacked on the head a few times and then share dinner with her. Talk to everyone for a while then select yourself. You should get a nice night's sleep because there's plenty more adventuring waiting in store. We've only just begun...

6. THE MUSEUM

First things first. After exploring the South Side a bit, travel to the museum and talk to the man in front of the main exhibit (he's the museum owner). Once he's finished rattling on, check out the monument for yourself. Once you've ruined it, go to the office near the main hall. Get a bollocking from the museum owner and then you're all set for a journey to the ruins. Head due south from Parm and let the action continue!







Saturn Bomberman: FIGHT!

Bomberman and his bomb-chucking chums take a voyage into 3D, as Saturn Bomberman: Fight! rocks the Saturn. GARY CUTLACK evacuates the area...





A UK release looks unlikely, but this game is so cool we just had to feature it in this month's mag.

Do not attempt to recreate any of the events you are about to see - Bomberman and his stunt team are highly skilled professionals, trained in the use of explosives, and there is, at all times, an emergency medical unit waiting off-screen should anything unexpected occur. What we're dealing with here is an extremely dangerous Semtex derivative - very unstable, unpredictable and highly explosive. Remember, this material should not be handled by untrained personnel.

Actually, it's just a bunch of dippy cartoon characters going mental with pretend bombs in a daft game, but let's not spoil the magic for the kids, eh?

TRANS-DIMENSIONAL DISINFORMATION

So this is Bomberman in 3D then? Well, sort of. When the game begins the characters all walk into the centre of the arena, looking pretty cool. Hi-res design and traditionally colourful Bomberman graphics make this element of the game look great, but once the action gets under way the camera retreats to a strictly fixed angle. 'Isometric Bomberman' would be a more accurate description, but not such a catchy name. Still, the graphics are certainly a huge step-up from the usual 2D cartoony sprites, and the groovy style of the cute little bombers has been perfectly reproduced in 3D, with monkeys, schoolgirls, penguins, robots, aliens and of course, an evil-magician-with-a-pumpkin-for-a-head dropping bombs all over the place.

THE BUREAU OF WEAPON DESIGN

You want to know what's new, right? Probably the coolest new feature in the game is the jump option. All characters can now leap over exploding bombs right from the outset, and a double press of the jump button allows players to leap extra-high and

The cute characters all react to the action on-screen. Their cute faces change as the action progresses, with some cool eye-bulging and tear-flowing moments when they get caught in a huge nuclear blast.







Nooo! Monkey-boy has got a mega-bomb (top left). Stand-by for action!



avoid the embarrassment of being caught in explosions from below. Thanks to the isometric design most levels have walls that can be jumped over as well, and because of this new visual style there's a lot more room to manoeuvre too. Some levels have sprawling courtyard areas and wide-open spaces allowing for plenty of comedy running-around-in-circles-chasing-someone-with-a-big-bomb moments. But even with all this '3D' innovation, bombs can only be thrown in four directions, which keeps the gameplay feeling pretty similar to the earlier Bomberman games.

IF I GO, I'M TAKING YOU ALL WITH ME!

There's actually one massive change to the Bomberman gameplay style - the addition of a beat 'em up-style energy bar. This system drastically changes the atmosphere of the game - in the classic Bomberman games one hit equalled instant death, so complete panic would break out when you were in a tricky situation. This doesn't happen so much now, as the bombastic heroes can survive three or four standard bomb hits before they expire. Fans of Carry On films also had great fun playing the original Bomberman, what with the power-ups increasing the 'length" and 'girth' of their characters' bomb blasts when collected. Sid James would be pleased to hear that there's a new dodgy size reference in Bomberman: Fight! as players can either be 'big' or 'small' depending on how many hits they've taken. Characters all start off at roughly the same size, but each time they take a hit their energy bar decreases a bit, and the singed fighter shrinks! Get too small and you won't be able to kick bombs out of the way, or pick up the power-ups, so the game gets a lot tougher. Serves you right.



I STUDIED NUCLEAR SCIENCE

Allow me to introduce you all to the 'big' bomb, which is easily the coolest addition to Bomberman's world of high explosives.

Underneath each player's energy bar is a slightly smaller gauge which gradually fills each time a player chucks a bomb. When it reaches full power, a huge (no, *really* huge) bomb may be launched. There are some pictures of this über-bomb dotted around these pages, partly because it's a cool weapon and partly because the massive explosions look so damn good. Any player caught in the blast will lose their entire energy bar in one go, so it's advisable not to run around aimlessly before dropping the bomb on your own head - like I usually do. Bomberman enters the nuclear age, and these massive 3D explosions are probably the highlight of this new Bomberman game.





The super-cute training and story modes are great – but all in Japanese.





Victory has been secured! The game camera zooms in on the winner, showing the cool 3D style.





Bigger and better? You betcha! There are now two kinds of mega-bomb in Bomberman, one produces a huge conventional blast, while the second generates an absolutely massive nuclear-style cloud which devastates most of the screen! Anyone caught at 'ground zero' in the blast's epicentre will instantly die!

NEW POWER GENERATION

The power-ups are like a box of chocolates - you never know what you're gonna get. As all of the special weapons, abilities and booby prizes are gained by picking up a '?' icon, it's pot luck whether you're given a super-bomb or have your player's jumping skills cancelled.



MAX POWER

Does exactly what is says on the box - boosts your players bombs to their maximum explosive size.



VERTICAL BOMBS

Allows players to drop three bombs on top of each other, for an awesome close-range wall of fire.



Thanks to the multi-storey design, bombs can be thrown onto players below...



...but good players put an early end to the fight by nuking the little sods!



The flames and explosions look great - we like Bomberman: Fight!

UNIVERSAL SOLDIER

As we've all got attention spans similar to those of juvenile delinquent root vegetables, coders HudsonSoft have included loads of different play modes to entertain us. Let's break 'em down, man:

STORY MODE

Hmm... not much use to non-Japanese speaking readers, but still good for laughing at some mad comedy voices. Your selected player fights all of the other characters one-on-one, with some groovy artwork and story scenes between rounds. Completely useless and incomprehensible though, but oddly amusing all the same - just like Lee Nutter.



TRAINING MODE

This is cool! A super-cute mini version of the game starts to play, while on-screen instructions tell players what to do. The cheesy remix of the main theme is definitely an easy listening classic, while the comedy slapstick action of the bombs-on-the-head demo is great fun to watch. Oh, it's all in Japanese of course, but that just makes it funnier.

BATTLE MODE

Yes! This is the reason we come to work - multi-player Bomberman sessions! Two, three or four players can take part in a more personal battle, which is easily the best feature of this new Bomberman game. And don't worry if you haven't got a multi-tap (or any chums), because a four-player battle can still be played with the Saturn being the other three bombers. And if you really haven't got any friends to play with, try inviting some homeless people to stay with you - they'll be glad of the warmth and comfort, and you can experience Bomberman's awesome multi-player mode. Everyone's a winner!

SURVIVAL MODE

Bomberman is left to fend for himself in the jungle - can you trap rabbits and fight alligators? Only joking. Survival Mode sees



Thanks to the addition of the mega-bomb gauge, the game encourages much more aggresive play - dropping large numbers of standard bombs fills the gauge quicker, meaning, you've guessed it, even more destruction. Cool.





(Below and left) Full-on explosions. Fire. Bombs. Danger. Panic. Top game!





Boom! Some incredible explosions can be seen in Bomberman: The Next Generation, mainly thanks to the open arenas which allow everyone to bomb the same place.

one player tackling the other bombers one after the other, with only one energy bar to get through them all. Big challenge? Actually it's easier than it sounds, but it gets tougher when the computer characters gang-up against you for a bit of unfair two-on-one action.

HISTORY REPEATING

We've all had fun playing Saturn Bomberman: Fight! for the last few weeks - it's even managed to take the place of our traditional lunchtime multi-player games (Quake and Death Tank), and there's little doubt that the game would be a big seller if it was released over here. But you know what I'm going to say next, don't you? The chances of us seeing a UK version of this game seem to be pretty remote at the moment, so it looks like we'll have to add Bomberman: Fight! to the ever-growing list of reasons to start buying import games. Which is pretty sad really. If Sega want to maintain the Saturn's reputation of being a console for the 'diehard' gaming element, they had better start releasing games that us diehard gamers want to play - like Saturn Bomberman Fight! We despair sometimes, we really do.




Cool animated intro? Check. Big-eyed cartoon girls with blue hair? Check.



They look surprised, don't they? Probably because they're about to get a massive nuke dropped on their cute, cartoony little heads. War isn't pretty.



We haven't quite figured out the significance of these groovy 'bunny girls' that appear in the intro and some of the cut-scenes, but er... we like them.



HORIZONTAL BOMBS

Lets your character drop three bombs in a row with one button press. Good for trapping players in corners.



BIG BOMB BOOST

Boosts the super-bomb gauge to maximum, making major destruction much easier - time to panic!



RED BOMBS

Makes bombs explode much faster after they've been dropped. Handy for speedy in-out military attacks!



SPEED-UP

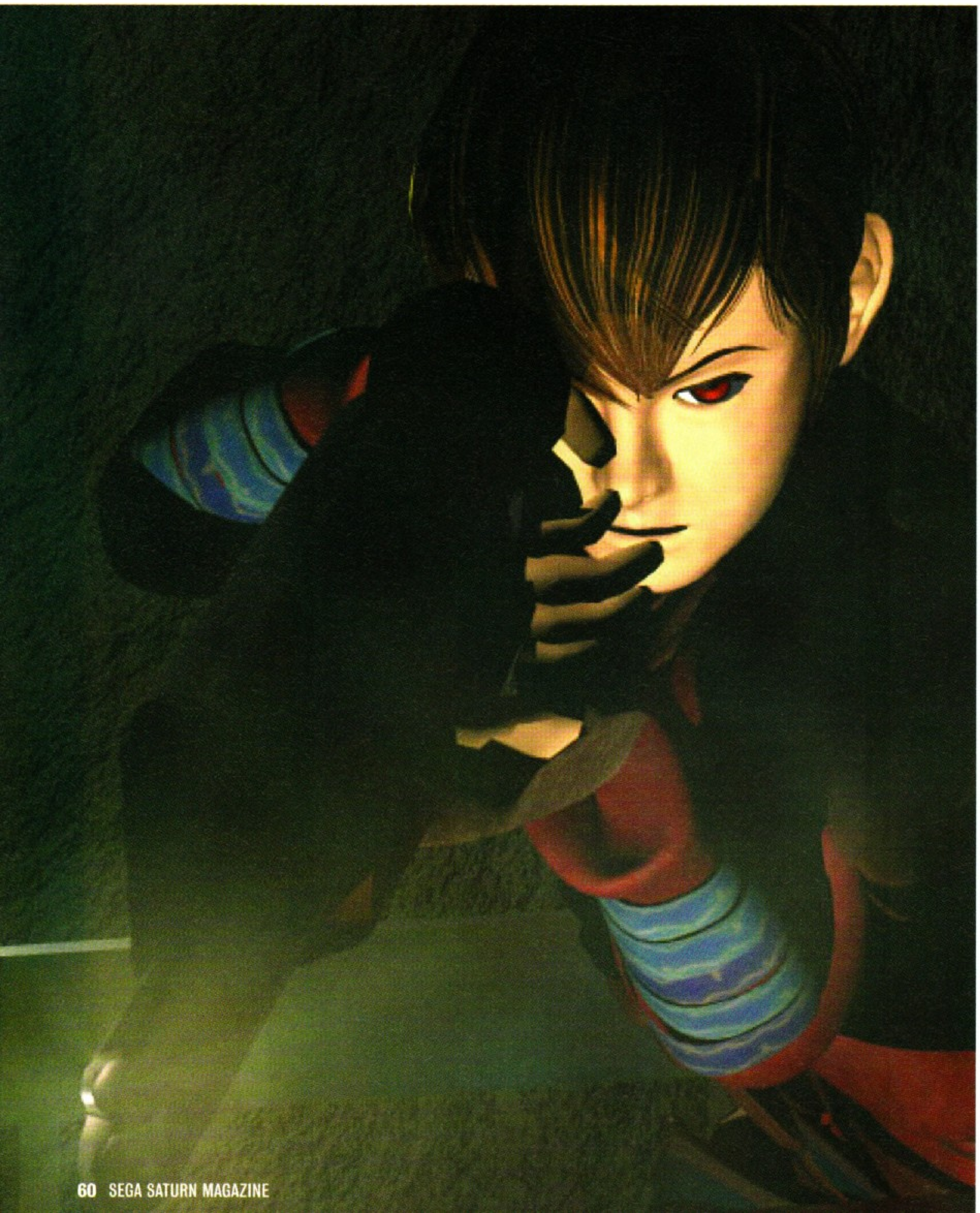
If I need to explain what a speed-up does, I think you're reading the wrong magazine.

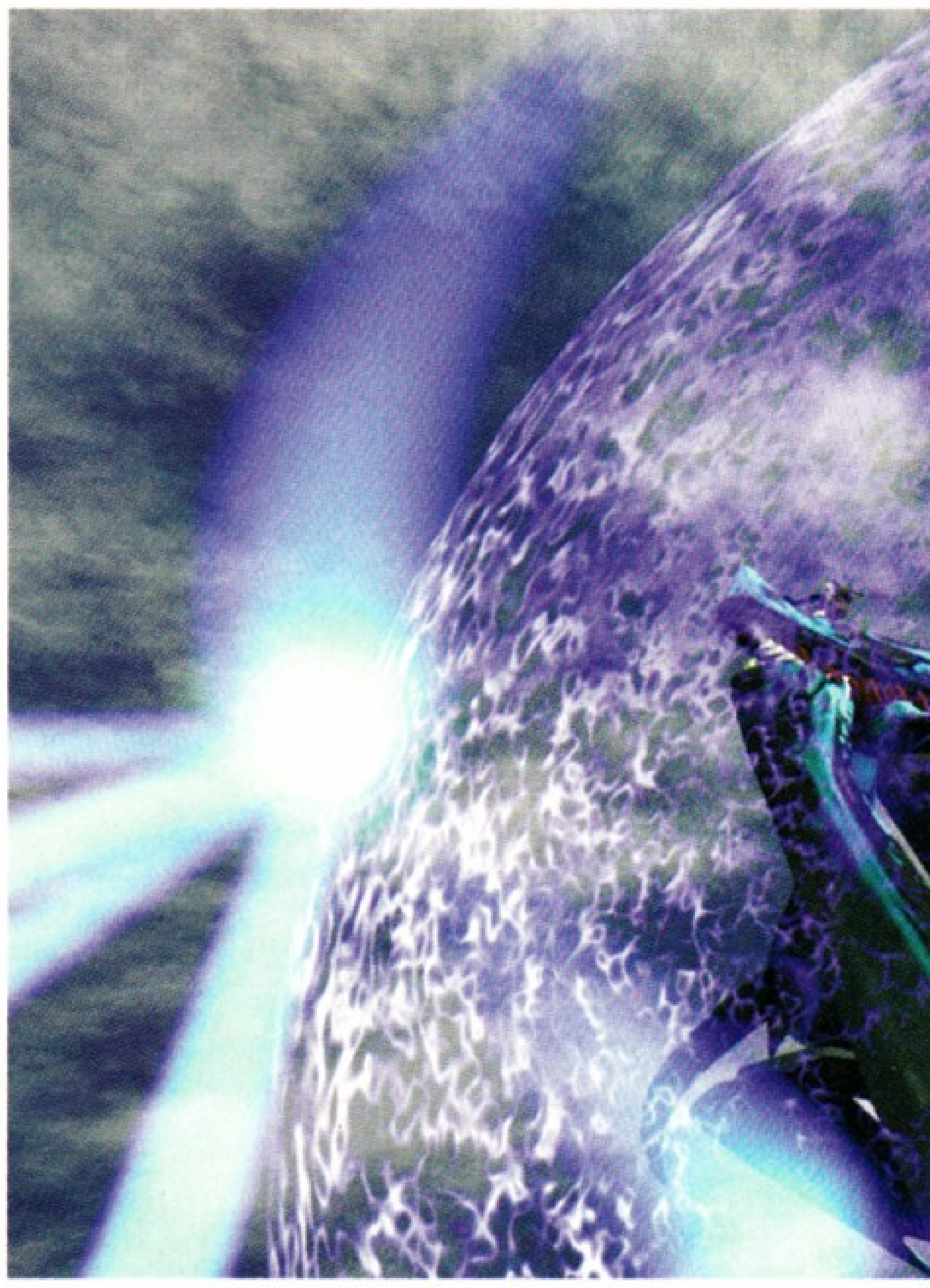


FLIP CONTROLS

Reverses the control of your player, so up is down and left is right, if you know what I mean. Awkward.

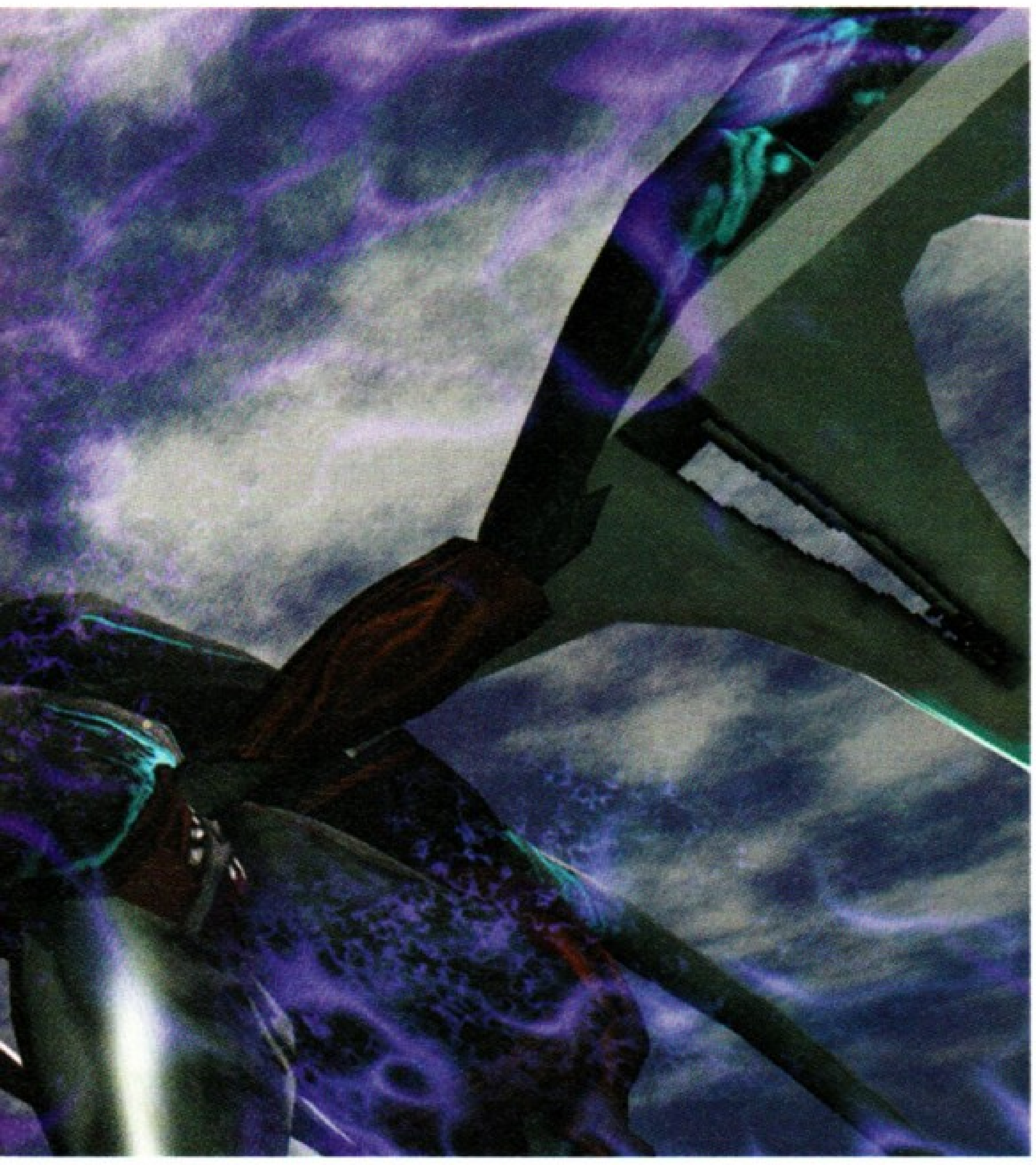
The saga continues...











Panzer Dragoon Saga is shaping up to be one of the greatest Saturn games ever! Its awesome combination of action and adventuring (plus the best graphics ever!) makes it the BIG game for 1998! RICH LEADBETTER continues the coverage...

MIND-BLOWING!

It's now six weeks since the arrival of the Japanese final version of Panzer Dragoon Saga. Last month I was blown away by Team Andromeda's accomplishments. My senses were sent packing by the most incredible graphics I think I've ever seen the Saturn produce... my mind was immersed in a truly epic adventure that could well qualify this superb game as the best adventure I've ever had the pleasure of experiencing!

Six weeks on and the pleasure has not diminished! This game is just so cool to play - regardless of the Japanese text which makes the plot itself pretty incomprehensible - I can state categorically right now that you aren't going to be disappointed with this epochal videogame. It's gonna be a classic!

The coverage in SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE continues! This issue we deal with the complex fighting system and continue the adventure through to the conclusion of Disc Two (there are four in all!). We'll conclude the preview next issue (when we should hopefully get a finished English language version) and then it's review time. Ready yourself for a massive score: this game is just amazing!







LAST MONTH...

In the last edition of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE we travelled through Disc One of Panzer Dragoon Saga... and what an epic journey it was! We quested through a vast series of canyons, through a deeply inhospitable desert, camped out with a travelling caravan of travellers and then journeyed north to a vast waterscape. And then we did battle with Azel and her Dark Dragoon (yup, turns out that Azel isn't actually you, it's your competition!). And with her defeated (for now), it's on with a vengeance into Disc Two of Panzer Dragoon Saga...





▲ The first water level (left) and the travelling caravan (right).





Meanies lurk behind an enormous floating rock (top). Close in and let rip with the lock-on missiles for maximum damage distribution!

THE MAELSTROM

The first task of Disc Two sees you returning to the waterscape area so recently conquered in Disc One. The forces of evil have already set up camp there, positioning their infernal machinery in order to create a massive tornado storm. You fly directly into the storm, taking down enemies en route until you reach the eye. Here you can bear witness to some of the greatest graphics the Saturn has ever seen as you take out the machinery causing the storm. And then, as the weather subsides, a vast ship of unknown origin hoves into view... What can we do about that?

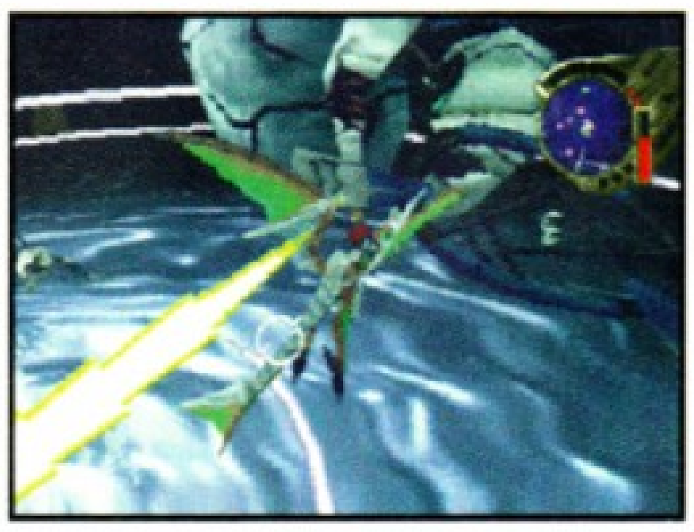


















Bribe this guy with cash for essential information.

THE CITY

The capital city of the map, this is the place where you'll dig up the hottest information on your quest. In fact, it's the focal area of the game for the entirety of Disc Two and Disc Three. Essentially, the characters in this city give you missions that take you across the length and breadth of the land. The city itself has a small industrial area, a pub/club (which is a veritable fountain of information) plus small dwellings for each of the characters. There's even a well which hides an odd secret. The city is actually split into two different areas (there's an enormous door you can't get through until later on in the game), but that isn't your first worry. Oh no. Concentrate on the characters in the club and the guy repairing his ship...



▲ Talking to the locals in the club might yield some useful info...





▼ Question the inhabitants of the hero's town to get hold of more essential nuggets of knowledge.











THE SHIP

After returning to the City for a "debriefing" by the guy repairing his craft, it's time to fly back to the north atop your dragoon steed for a bit of a recce on this mysterious craft that materialised at the end of the Maelstrom episode. The ship is hovering, stationary, over the now-still waterscape. Breaching the hull, our hero infiltrates into the depths of the ship, before being discovered, knocked out, taken to a new ship and then tortured brutally in a pretty savage full-motion video sequence. Rescued at the final moment, you reach the deck of the ship and reunite with your dragoon before the epic boss sequence begins.







Our hero infiltrates the ship, gets captured, tortured, escapes... and then does battle with a horrific boss!



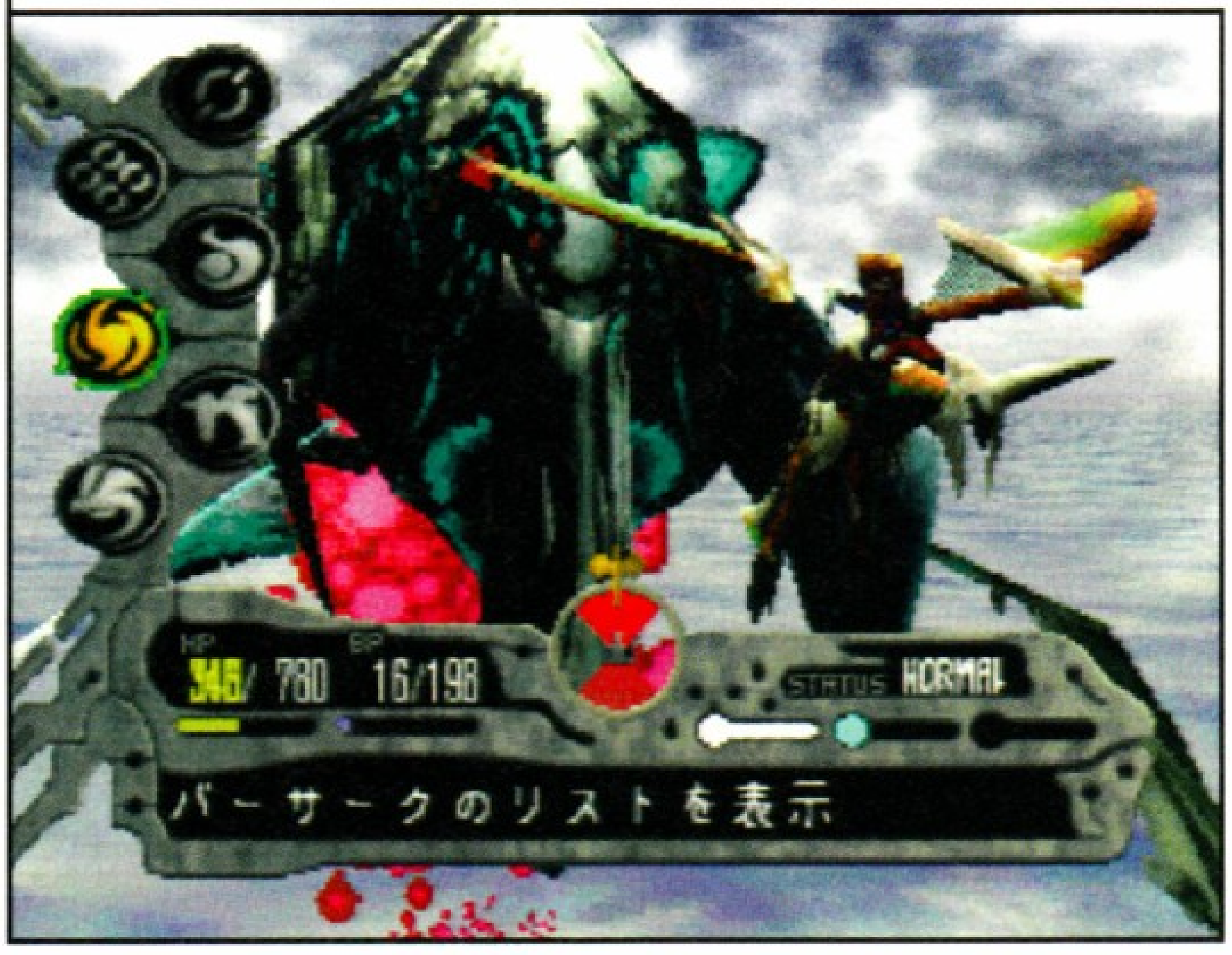


BOSS: THE FLY/SHIP COMBO

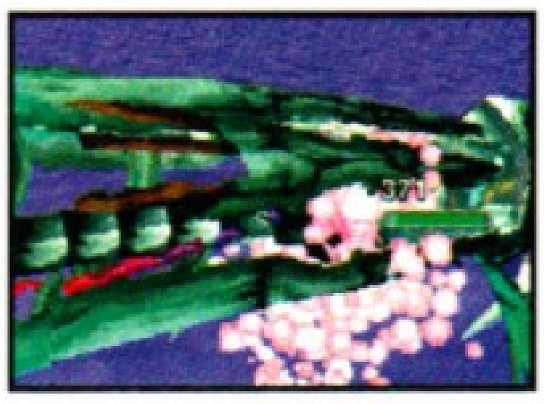
The craft you were transferred to actually turns out to be a massive carrier for an enormous mechanical fly creature, being towed along underneath. Take out the craft and the Fly frees itself, ready to make life for your dragoon something on the miserable side. Actually it's only its side- mounted cannons that really cause you any problems - the front-mounted electro-device and rear venom clouds take so long to charge up you can easily dodge out of the way and then rain in the damage!











The ship has wall-to-wall cannons, but it's at least more predictable than the boss it carries underneath! It's a battle royale!

THE EAST LAKE BASIN

Yup, it's another water-based level, but it's also the most spectacular stage yet seen in the game (but not the best in the entire game - things get amazingly cool in Disc Three!). A vast series of lakes populated with ancient ruins, encircled by enormous cliff-faces is the setting for the next level of Panzer Dragoon Saga. The primary aim of this stage doesn't become apparent straight away. First of all you need to gain access to the second lake, which is behind an impassable cliff. A passageway needs to be restored before you can move on to the next stage. But how are you doing to activate the ancient towers when you alone don't have the strength to move them? Perhaps the whale inhabitants of the level can help...

Once you're through, you find the activation glyphs required to start some ancient rotors found in the first stage. The problem here is that the enemy also have interest in these ruins and they've stationed battallions of sky fortresses and scout craft at every major point in the stage. Suffice to say, you're in for the fight(s) of your life every time you approach a new area of the level.

However, once the rotors have been activated, an ancient structure emerges on the second stage... but first of all, there's a boss to defeat!





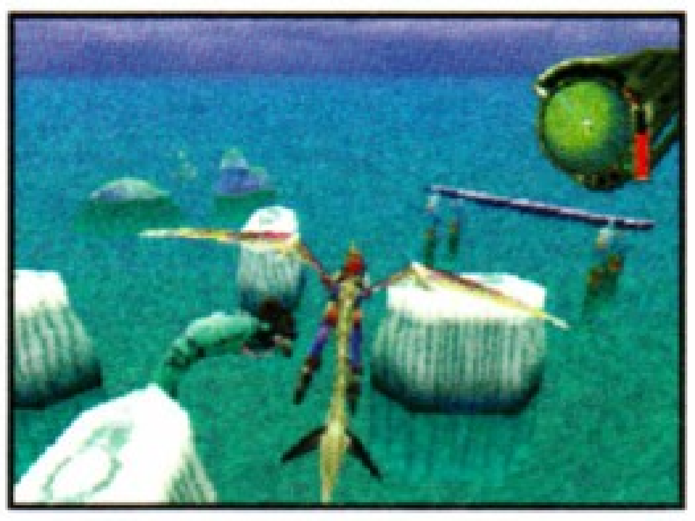
The lakes offer some pretty hardcore puzzling action, interspersed with some of the hardest minions you would have met to date!





Those guys above hang out at every important stage of the level. Fight!





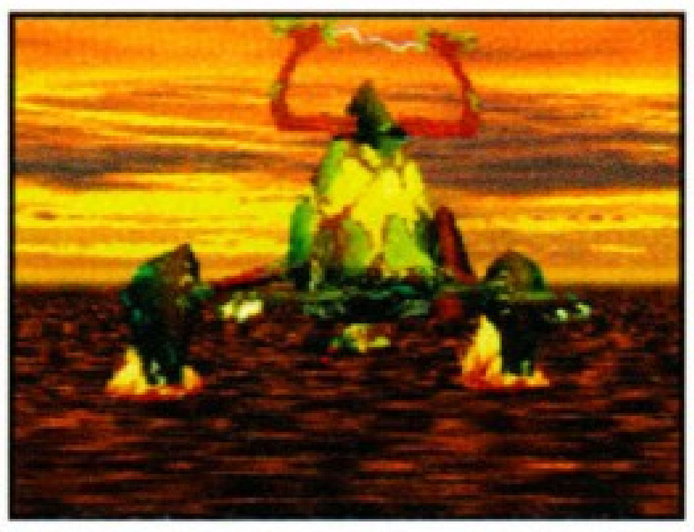
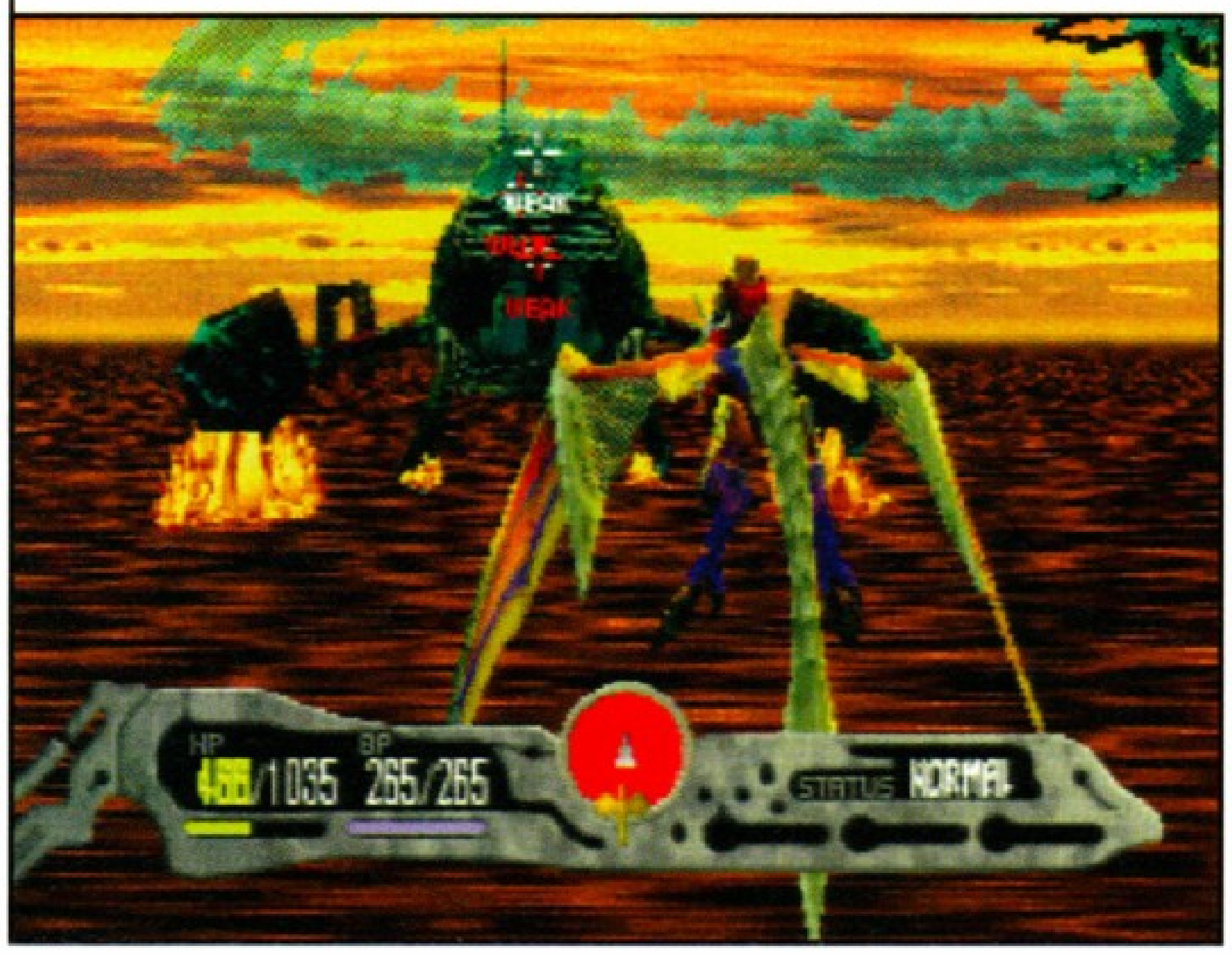


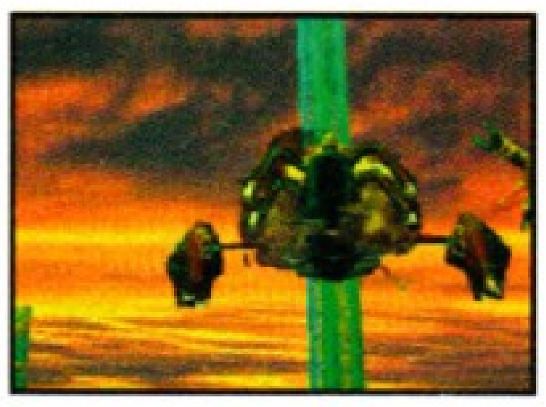
▲ As you progress through the level, the sun sets and night arrives!

BOSS: STATIC CONDUCTOR

One of the toughest bosses you'll have encountered to date, this monster conducts massive amounts of electricity. His aim is simply to immobilise you and then let you have it with 20,000 volts! Suffice to say that a huuuge amount of damage is inflicted every time this guy gets in a massive electric strikes on you. You can't really avoid his immobilising bolts... but what you can do is get frozen in front of his weak spot, fire up a shield and then just concentrate your fire. Sounds easy eh? Nope! This boss is so utterly hard it defies belief.

You can't help but get hit by this boss's immobilisation ray. The key is to choose the spot where you get frozen... and then let rip!

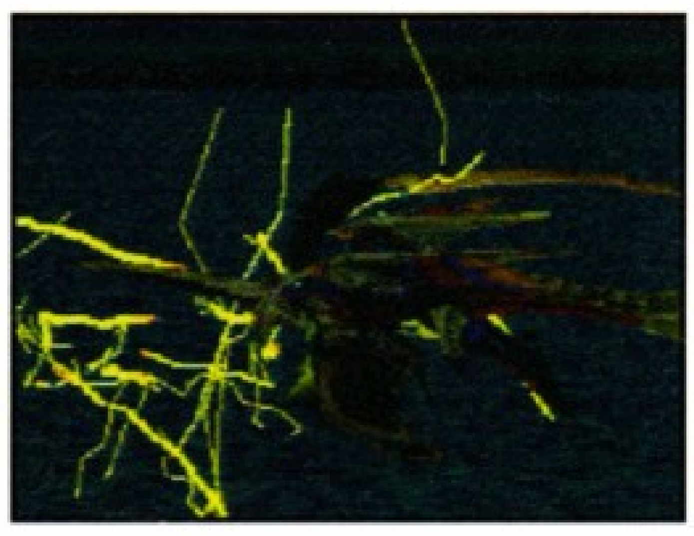
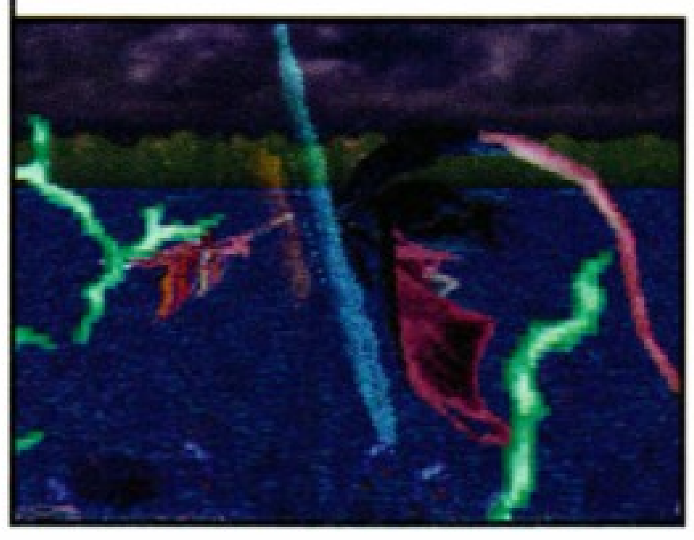
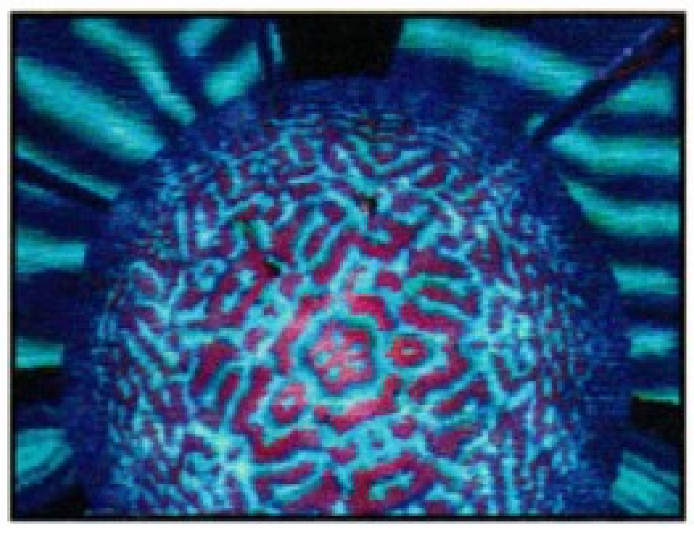







RETURN OF THE DARK RIDER

Azel's back atop her enormous dragoon which somehow manages to look even nastier than it did last time. That's probably because it is. Luckily, despite a vastly more powerful berserker attack and extra lasers built into its flanks, the same tactics used last time (with some small variations) work pretty well this time. Once defeated, the two dragoons square off and prepare for ramming speed. Just before their two heads collide, a strange mystical energy is given off, resulting in an enormous bang... this sends both riders falling down into the abyss!



THE CAVE SYSTEM

Our hero and Azel awake in a dark, dank cave. Yes, the sworn enemies need to work together to beat this latest challenge - only teamwork can take both riders from the depths and back into the real world! Luckily, a bizarre scooter style object is found in the cave with them allowing access into the depths of the underworld cave system.

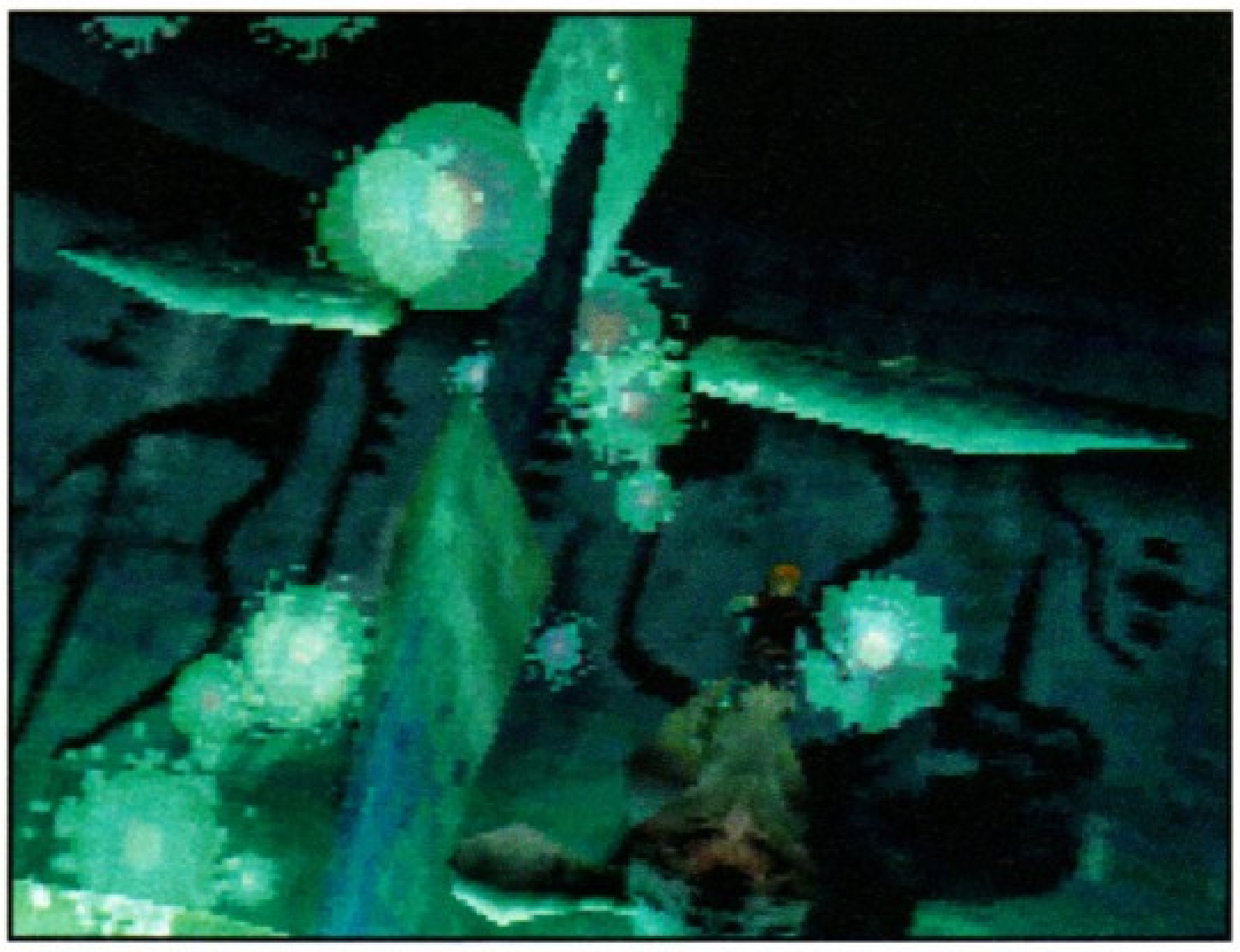
Of course, the primary aim here is to locate the exit that takes you out of here, reuniting you with your faithful dragoon... but this task in itself is fairly daunting. There are at least five different main stages to the cave system, packed to the walls with creatures that leap out to ambush you. These meanies are tough: some are vulnerable to your cannons, some to your lock-on lasers. The catch is that if you hit them with the wrong weapon, they grow stronger! And then there are the shot-

The key to this stage is an enormous green room, inhabited by a ceiling-dwelling boss... If you can figure out how to defeat it, the level is yours!

The key to this level is exploration. Find every last room and raid them mercilessly for the power-ups you need!



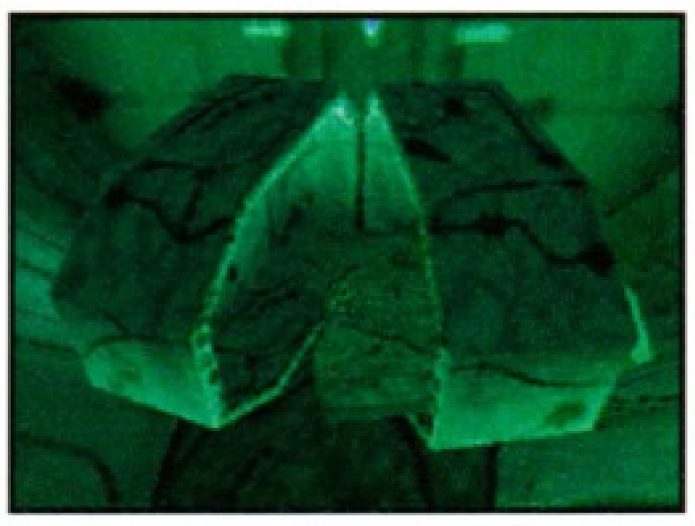




▲ Setting these enormous dynamos into action opens the doors.



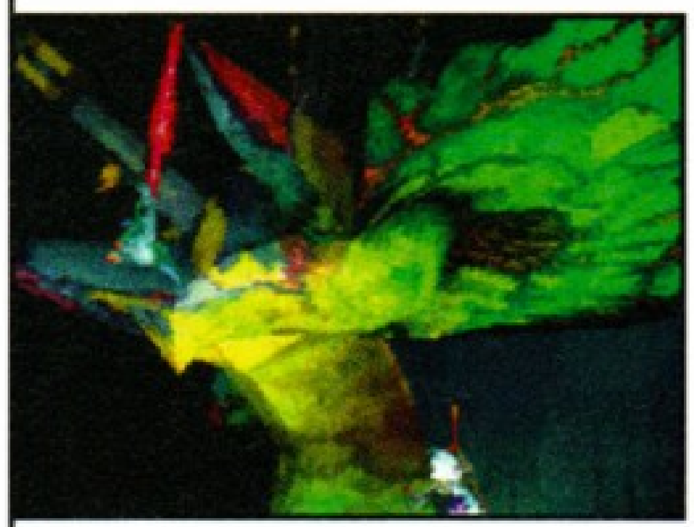

Eggs, fire-spitting flowers, insects and flies infest the cave system.

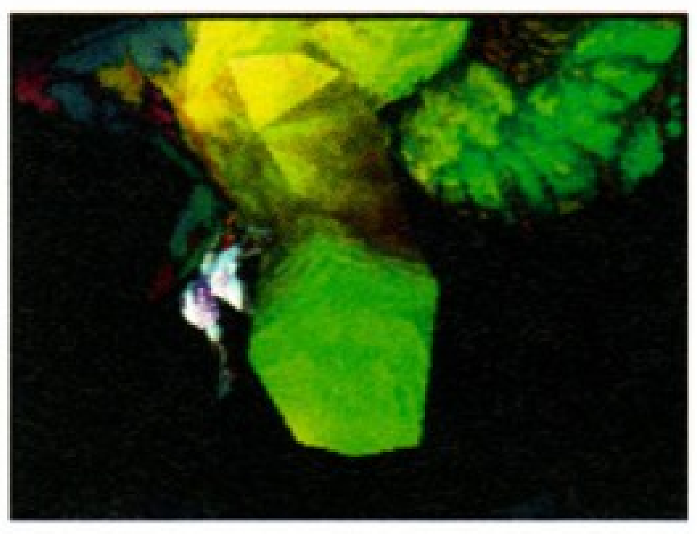



The pic (right) shows one of the lifts that transports you between levels.

BOSS: EVIL CEILING CREATURE!

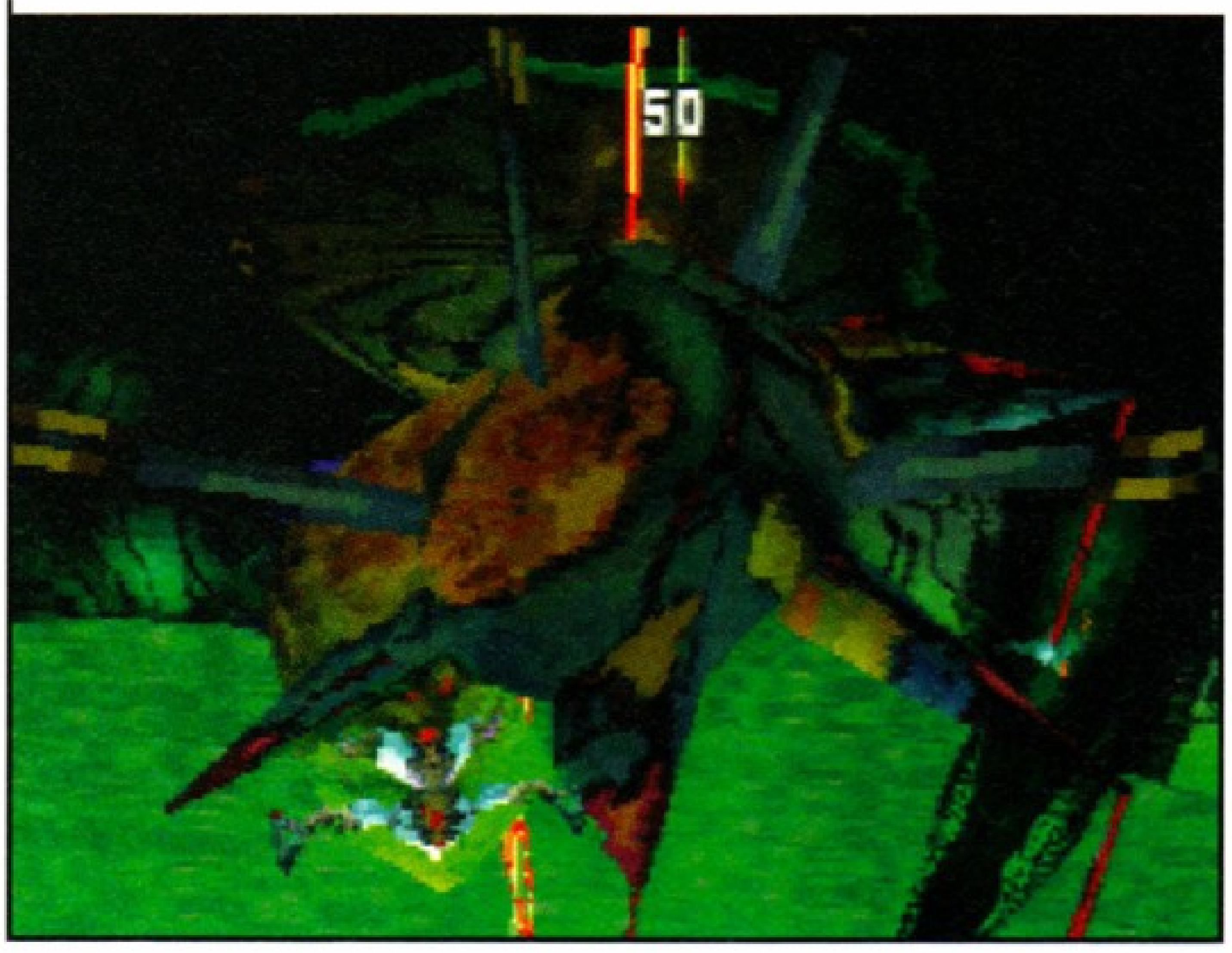
Remember that you're sitting on a scooter. A scooter than can only hover a few feet off the ground. Now you're facing off against a creature high above you, raining down vast reams of destruction on your sorry ass! Somehow you've got to find a way to divert your weapons to reach the boss high up on the ceiling whilst dodging the nasties the boss is throwing your way.













Once the cave system has been conquered, one boss is all that stands between you and access to Disc Three of Panzer Dragoon Saga.

BOSS TWO: THE ESCAPE

As you and Azel take the lift that returns you to the surface (and presumably your dragoon chum), a massive boss creature (yes, another one) gives chase! This guy really is tough - he has this irritating habit of blasting immobilising plasma in your direction and protects his weak areas with the flower creatures from the caves (which blast back at you whenever you strike them). Yessiree-Bob, this is the toughest fight you've had yet!







This boss has an attack to take you out wherever you choose to fly.

AND NOW... THE CONCLUSION

The battle against the last boss creature brings about the conclusion of Disc Two. All of this adventuring accomplished and you're still not even halfway through the game! In the next edition of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE we'll be taking a good, long, hard look at the last chapters in this epic adventure! And yes, it gets better still!

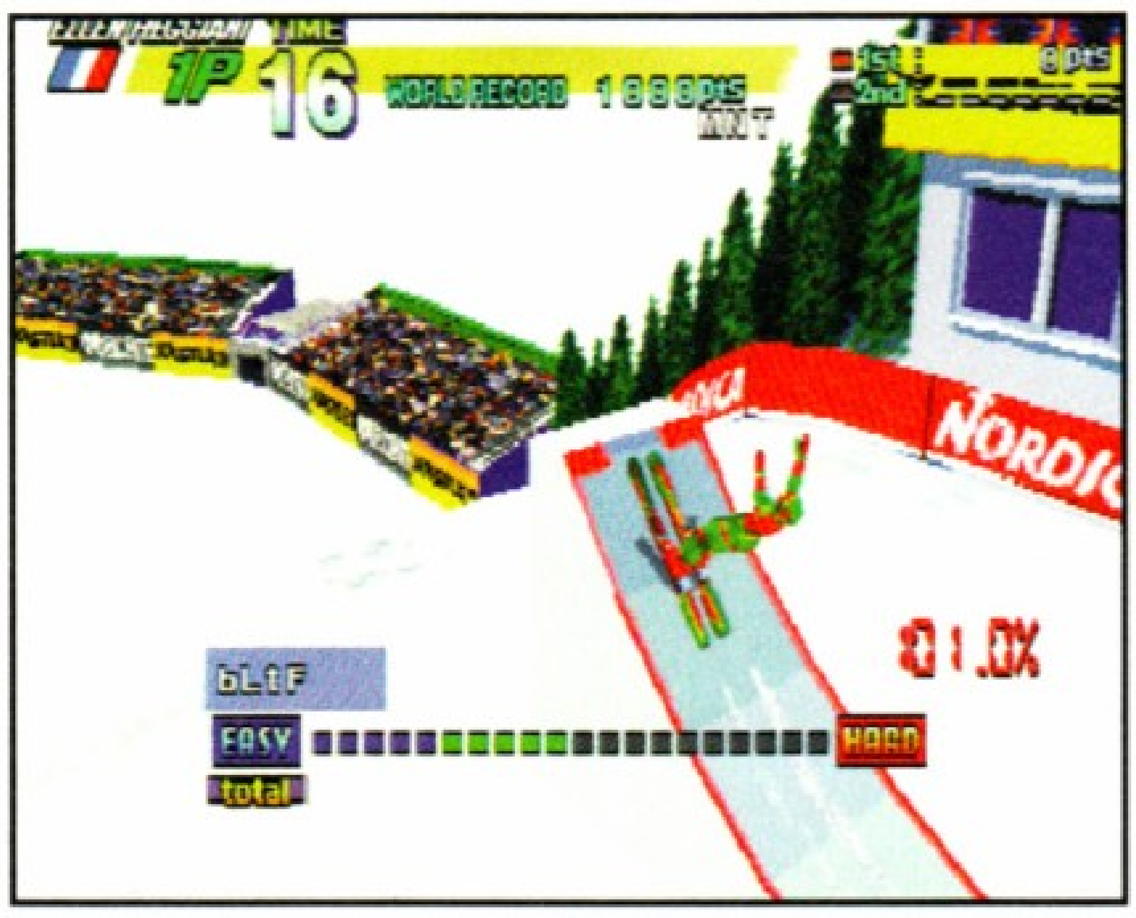
BY	SEGA		
RELEASE	FEBRUARY		PLAYERS
HARDWARE	PRICE	£39.99	
	STYLE	SPORTS	

Winter Heat gives us lard-arses a chance to pull on some tight lycra shorts and work up a sweat. Not good for people whose idea of heavy exercise is a nice brisk walk to the chip shop...

Winter Heat



▲ Nice tight costume. She must use a lot of talc.



I wish I could go into hibernation for the winter. Just imagine it - going to bed in November with a huge pile of tasty nuts and berries to look forward to in the spring. Squirrels have definitely got the right idea. But hang on a minute, those poor squirrels are going to miss the fun of the Nagano '98 Winter Olympics, and their tragic lack of thumbs means they will never be able to play Saturn games. Games like, for example, Winter Heat - Sega's latest button-pounding arcade conversion, featuring eight muscle-bound alpen athletes and eleven strenuous button-pounding events to compete in.

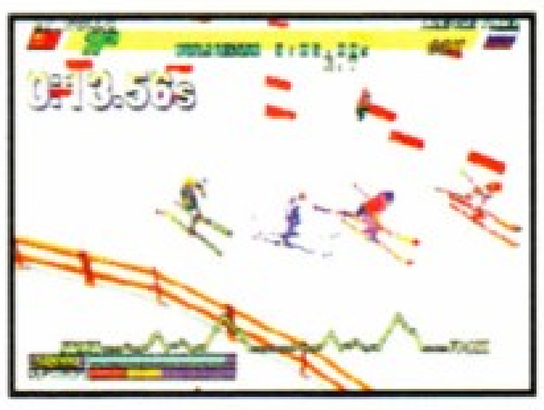
But don't misunderstand this game, it's not just about hammering buttons. The cross-country alpine skiing event is a great example of the more strategic gameplay that's in Winter Heat, with players needing to monitor the map at the bottom of the screen, saving their character's energy and stamina for the tough uphill climbs that are to come later.

The aerial trick section is pretty technical too - build up speed on the approach, charge for take-off when on the ramp, then press the power button while in the air to perform the moves. And talking of different techniques, there's also the downhill skiing and snowboarding, which rely on a furious burst of speed to start off with, before settling down into a test of gliding skills and steering around the courses.

The bobsleigh uses the same system too, and if you've ever seen the bobsleigh racing on telly you'll know what to expect - the sensation of speed here is amazing. Sorry to say this, but you really do have to see it moving to understand how incredible it looks. The winding track blasts into view and the display shakes and shudders as the suped-



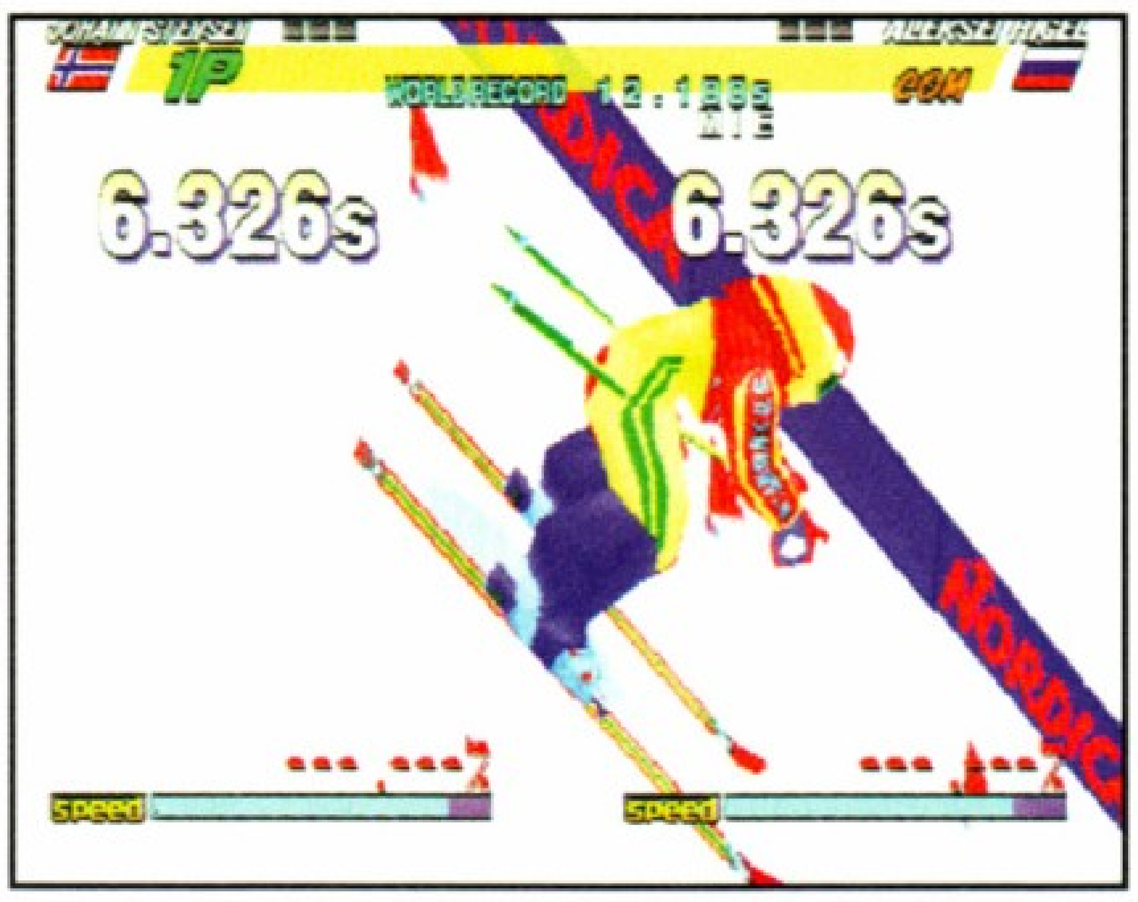

▲ A successful jump of 74.14 metres. The office record is about 116m - the ski jump is our favourite event.






CLOSE-UP HELMET SHOTS

What about those graphics, eh? Winter Heat looks incredible, but there is one small problem - the PAL conversion. We used to be proud of Sega's rich heritage of full-screen UK games, but Sega Europe's cost-cutting measures mean they rarely attempt any optimisation on UK releases these days. Still, it makes little difference to a game of this kind, as everything's so smooth and colourful to start with. And there's one other disappointing omission - no action replay! The game's intro features some spectacular camera work, which funnily enough, makes the game look absolutely amazing.



▲ Speed ski-ing is mental! Top speeds are over 70mph, and some great crashes are possible at the bottom.



▲ Bobsleigh - looks pretty crap in a still picture, but you should see it move - it's incredibly fast.



▲ The players stretch and twist before a race, making Winter Heat one of the best-looking Saturn games yet.



▲ You're a winner! The extra-smooth apres-ski victory celebrations are very similar to the ones in Athlete Kings.



▲ The British competitor is ginger. That's not fair.

LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP

People always complain that these 'button pressing' sport games lack long-term appeal. So how would those same 'people' explain the fact that we STILL play Athlete Kings, over a year after its release? I'll tell you why - because it's great fun, and Winter Heat has the same incredible playability as its track-based prequel. And with the option to put together a 'custom' game featuring only your favourite alpen sporting events, I can personally guarantee you'll keep coming back for ages to beat those personal bests.



▲ These between-level screens show you how to play...

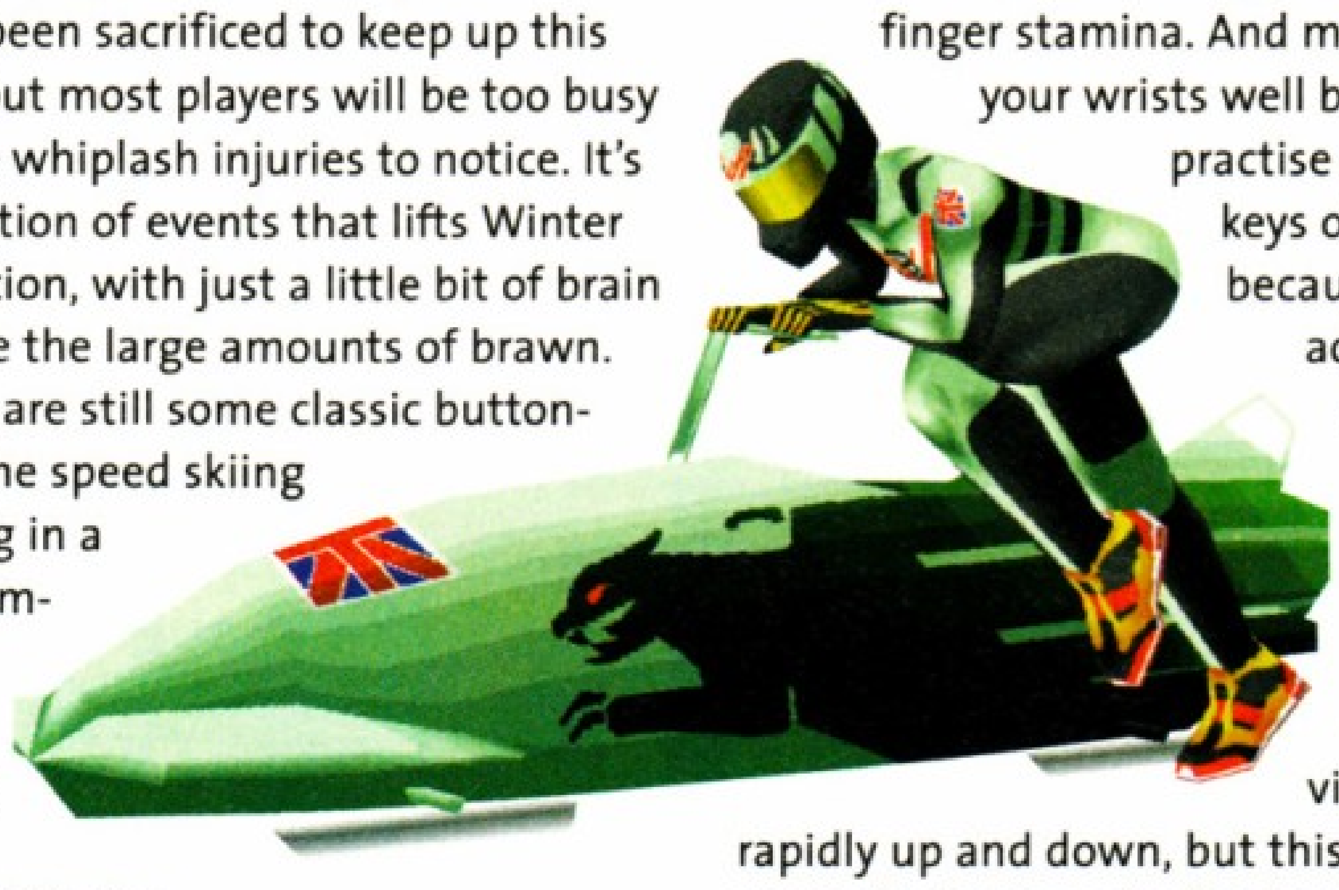


▲ They can be turned off after you get bored with them.



up sledge gets up to top speed. Obviously some track-side detail has been sacrificed to keep up this hefty turn of speed, but most players will be too busy trying to avoid severe whiplash injuries to notice. It's the more varied selection of events that lifts Winter Heat over the opposition, with just a little bit of brain needed to co-ordinate the large amounts of brawn.

Of course, there are still some classic button-bashing moments - the speed skiing event is literally skiing in a straight line while hammering away at the power button, in a pretty similar fashion to the 100m sprint from Athlete Kings, while the short track speed skating is basically a tough test of finger stamina. And make sure you exercise your wrists well before playing a game (I practise at work on the cursor keys of my computer), because the pad-thrashing action will take its toll after a few sessions of play. Personally, I've always favoured the 'stutter' technique of speed button pressing - tensing your arm and vibrating your finger rapidly up and down, but this method tends to make your whole arm ache for days afterwards. And you >>





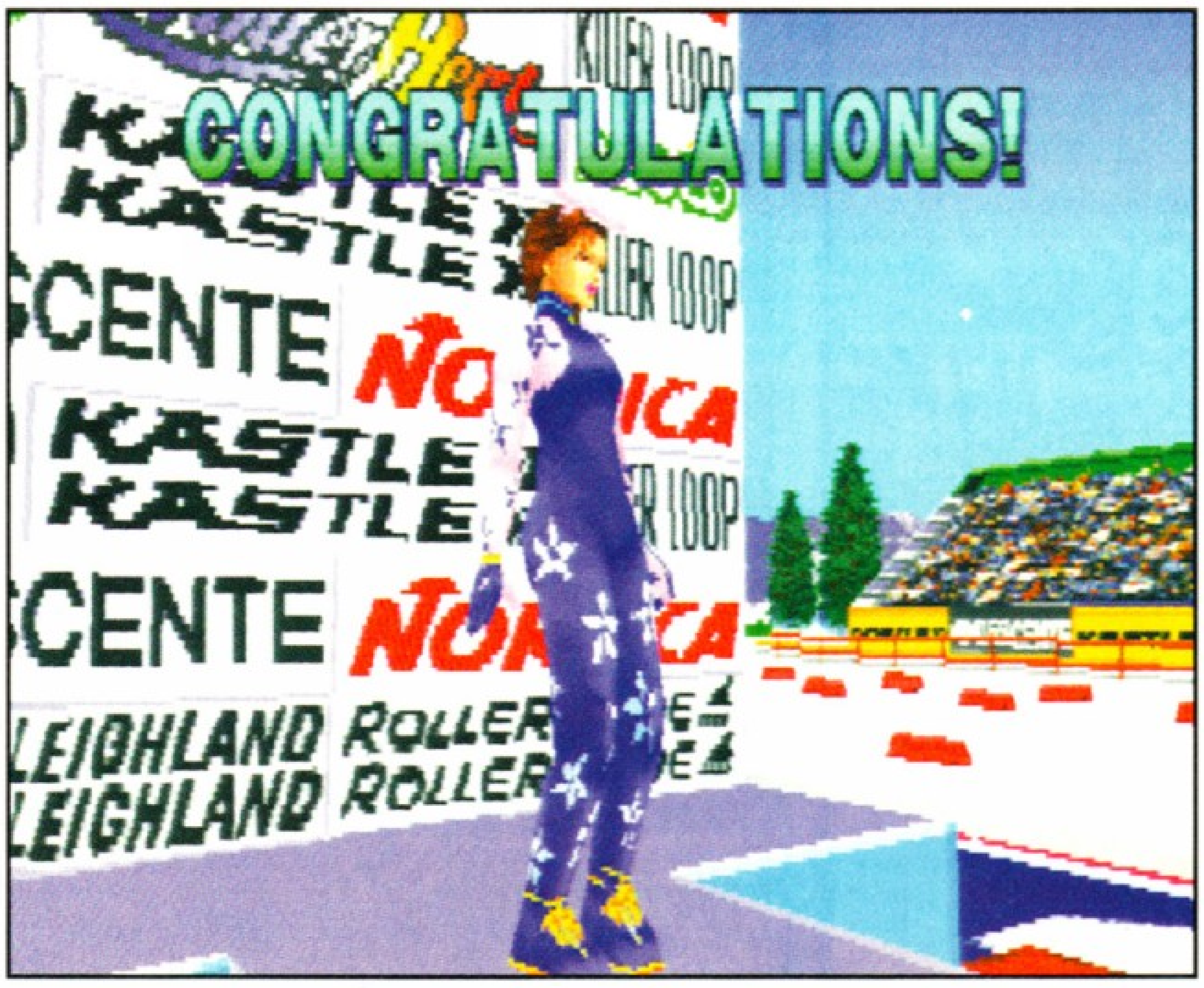
▲ That's the skeleton event. Same as the luge, really.



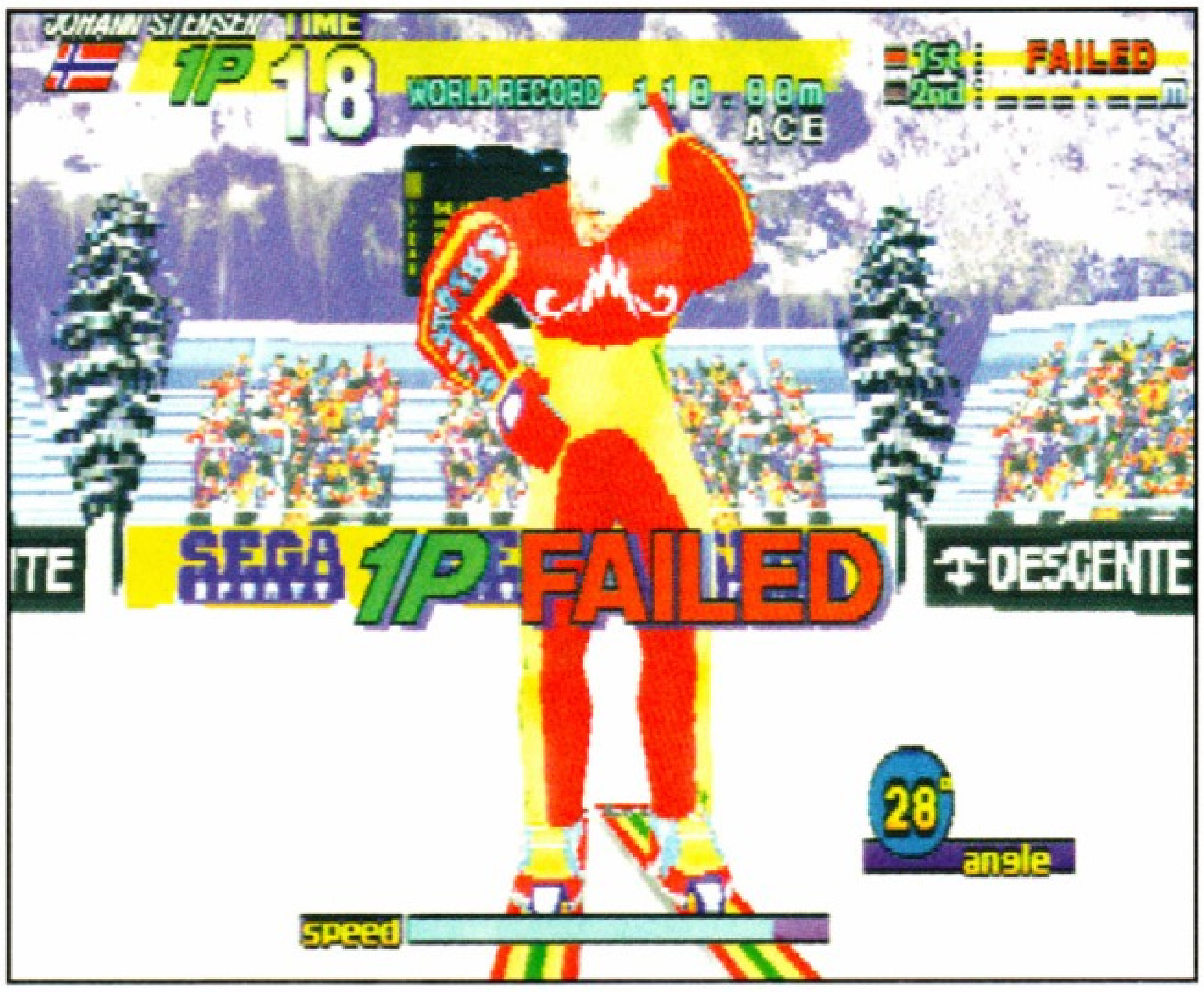




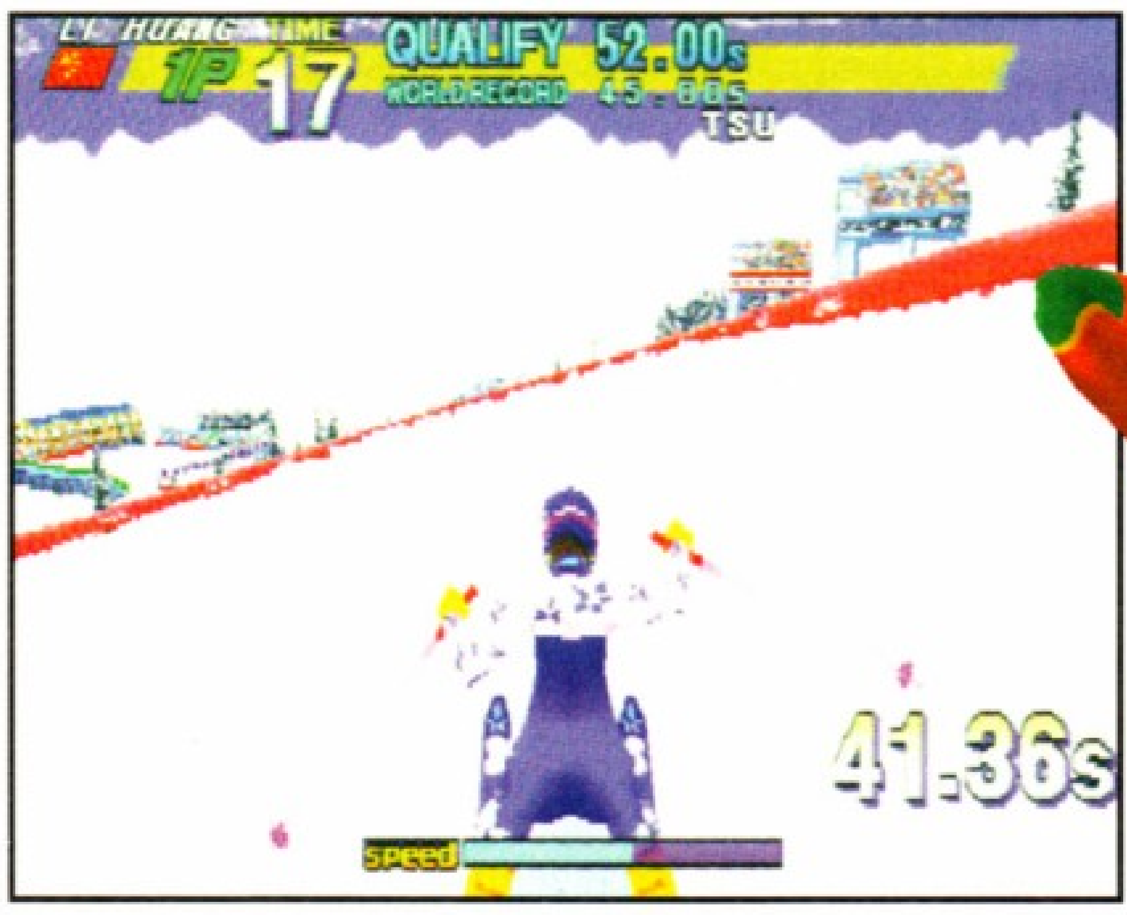
▲ Here's Japanese competitor Joe Kudou showing us how NOT to perform the Aerial trick: (1) Feeling confident, Joe selects a pretty tough stunt. (2) But that gauge isn't charged enough for the trick to work, (3) which launches poor Joe flying through the air at the wrong angle. (4) Joe lands on his face. (5) Joe has failed. Never mind Joe, you've still got another go.



▲ Finish all eleven events in one sitting to register a total score. Now beat it next time!



▲ Ski jump: high speed and a good 28 degree angle - he must have fluffed the landing.









look pretty stupid. I also find that sticking my tongue out slightly helps my concentration, and seems to boost my maximum button-pressing speed.

Anyway, probably the best way to avoid Winter Heat-related stress injuries is simply to watch someone else play it. Okay, it's not so much fun, but without the distraction of having to vibrate your fingers, the hi-res graphics look even better. The animation on these athletes is really great too - speed skaters dig their skates into the ice before the start to get a better grip, bobsleigh racers punch the air to psyche themselves up before a race, and the way players thump into the ground after a failed aerial trick is one of the funniest things I've seen for ages. Not that laughing at the failure of others is clever or anything. Well, not much.

And when you're bored of watching someone else make a mess of things, why not plug-in an extra few



▲ Another great-looking pre-race intro screen.

pads and 'chill out' with the excellent multi-player mode. Up to four people can flex and vibrate their finger muscles together, and just like the prequel Athlete Kings, playing against a Human opponent really does take the gameplay to an even higher level. Just be prepared to break a few joypads in the heat of competition...

We usually worry slightly when games like this get converted from the arcade, because the fun-for-ten-minutes arcade gameplay sometimes struggles to give us 40 quid's worth of home entertainment. But don't worry, the Saturn version of Winter Heat

[Gorgeous hi-res graphics and some classic 'old-skool' button hammering. Top game!]



▲ Speed skating: slow down for the corners, or pay the price.



▲ Skeleton: suicidal blokes on a sledge.







▲ The slalom uses the B button to push the poles away.







▲ The camera angles that are used to show the events are excellent. The cross-country skiing sometimes has players racing towards the camera, but it's so smooth and easy to play that it never gets confusing. The speed skating is viewed from a camera that 'floats' around the stadium. I'd like to see them do THAT on Grandstand...

features an extra three events (snowboarding, skeleton and aerial ski), all of which are just as good, if not better than the original eight arcade-only events. The best way to play it is to compete over all eleven events, in a Decathlon-style challenge to get the highest total score, while the custom game option lets players chose which events to compete in - handy for avoiding events that you're not too keen on.



Are there any bad points? Well, the PAL conversion has a bordered display, which is just plain sloppy on Sega's part and inevitably, some people will complain that the pretty simplistic gameplay just isn't enough to hold their attention. But here's some advice for those whining people - if you want a deep, challenging experience, buy yourself a massive RPG or an adventure game... leave us simple-brained adrenaline junkies alone to play Winter Heat!

So will you enjoy it? Of course you will. Just like Athlete Kings, Winter Heat is one of those games that can be played instantly, without reading the manual, learning the controls or having to remember the locations of pixies, fairies, magic keys and all the rest of that poncy rubbish. A proper old-fashioned test of your joypad manipulating skills, and the number one reason why we've been hunched-up in front of a TV screen rapidly moving our wrists. Well, maybe the number two reason, but even so, Winter Heat's the best game we've played for quite a while...

GARY CUTLACK







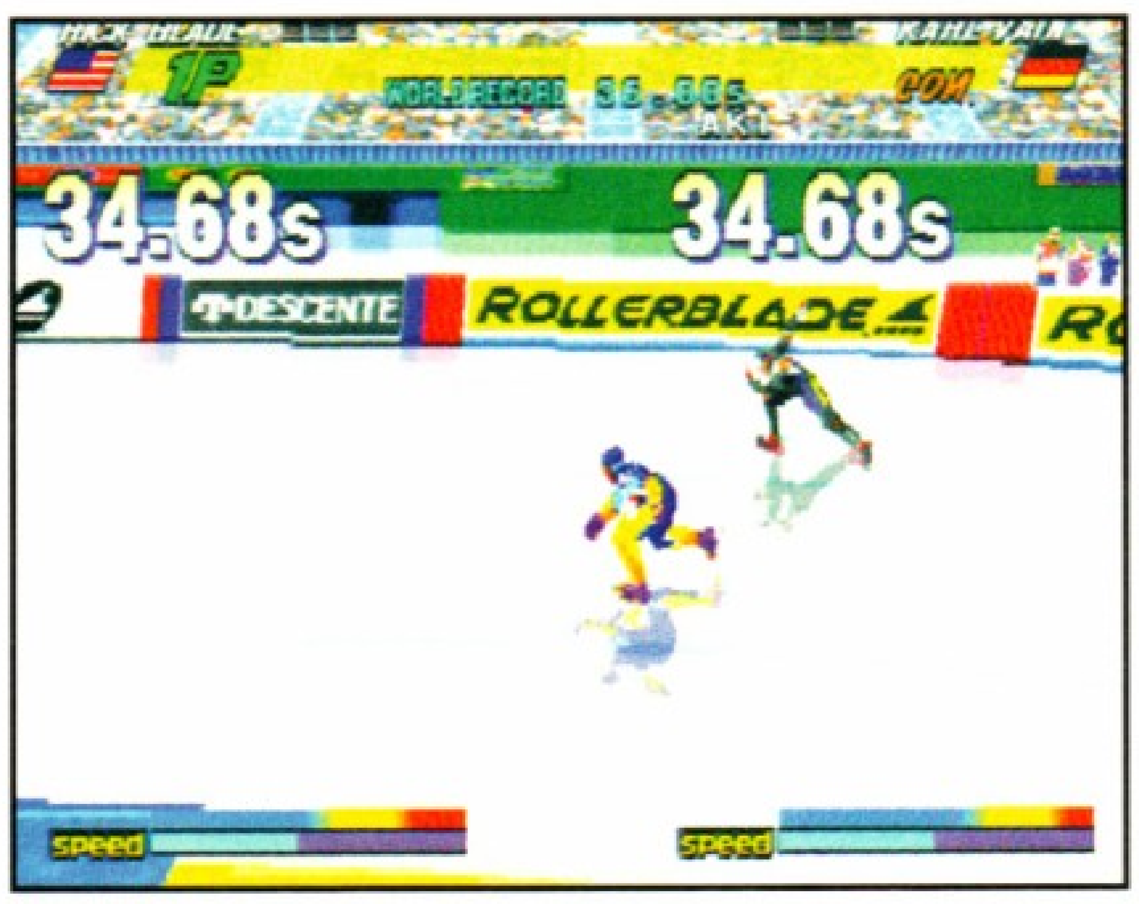
GRAPHICS	Super-smooth hi-res 60fps graphics. What more does a boy need? The sensation of speed in the bobsleigh is amazing.	93%
SOUND	Quite sparse, but what's there is top quality. The characters 'grunt' when launching themselves into action. I like that.	90%
PLAYABILITY	Great fun and very easy to pick up and play. Everybody likes these simple button-bashing games, don't they?	93%
LASTABILITY	Eleven cool events should ensure plenty of beat-the-high-score fun. Mastering the technical sports is pretty tough.	91%

OVERALL

Fun to play, looks gorgeous and there's even a four-player mode for extra measure. Definitely a 'cool' game. Ho ho.

92%

▼ About 40 seconds of constant button-pressing is needed in the speed skating. Build up those wrist muscles...



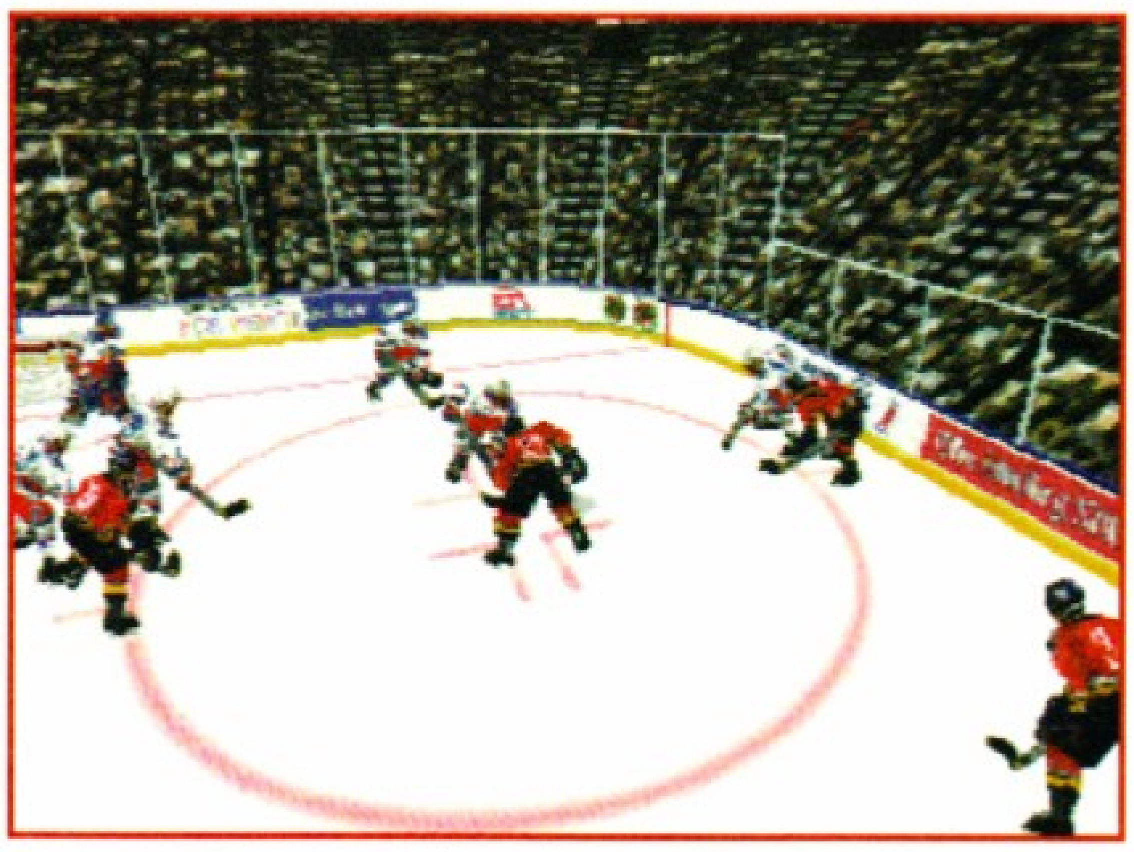
BY	ELECTRONIC ARTS	
RELEASE	FEBRUARY	PLAYERS x8
HARDWARE	PRICE £39.99	
	STYLE HOCKEY SIM	

As their final product for Sega's powerhouse console, NHL '98 guarantees that Electronic Arts will bow out of the Saturn market with a whimper as opposed to a bang. Here's why.

NHL '98



▲ The graphical compromises are immediately apparent.

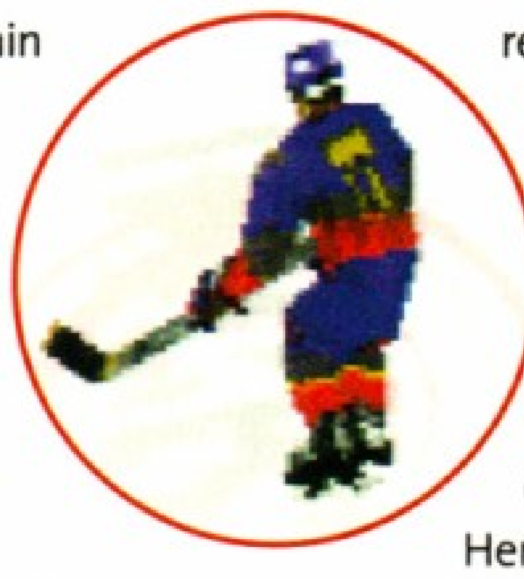


The PlayStation and PC versions of NHL '98 are largely regarded as being the finest examples of the ice hockey sim genre to date. The fast and fluid hockey action is coupled with some incredibly accurate play-by-play commentary, realistic player animation and some of the finest graphics ever witnessed in a sports sim. In short, a far cry from the God-awful Saturn version you see before you. Nice one EA.





So what's gone wrong? Well, the main problem lies in the fact that NHL '98 was developed primarily for the PlayStation and PC formats, with the trailing Saturn version getting the shitty end of the stick. The horrendous graphical compromises are the most salient example of this very point. To enable the game to run at a decent lick of speed, the coders have hacked away much of the essential visual frippery seen in other versions of the game, resulting in a most unattractive ice hockey sim. Gone are the stunning high-resolution textures, translucent and reflective effects (which Sonic R proved the Saturn is most capable of handling), scoreboard, names on jerseys, goal celebrations and even the referee! It really is quite appalling.



However, even with such noticeable omissions from the original game, NHL '98 exhibits an eye-bleedingly jerky frame rate. Herein lies the problem. Whilst the untidy graphics and lack of visual refinement is annoying, it would have been an easier pill to swallow had NHL been a rampantly playable hockey sim. But noooooo. The distinctly choppy frame rate has made the Saturn translation of NHL '98 almost unplayable, to the point where keeping track of the puck after a slapshot or gaining control after a rebound is damn near impossible. Suffice to say, the superlative NHL '98 gameplay which has led to other versions receiving such rave reviews

[The once mighty EA Sports have let Saturn owners down yet again with NHL '98.]



▲ Unfortunately, NHL '98 looks set to be EA's final Saturn product, with the games' giant citing falling Saturn revenues as the main factor in their decision to pull out. But we won't be losing too much sleep over it, considering Sega's own titles have beaten EA's hands down this year.















▲ It's good to see that the fight sequences have been put back into EA's NHL game, something that's been sadly missing since its early Megadrive incarnation.





▲ If NHL '98 had been given a decent conversion, it would almost certainly have wiped the floor with Sega's NHL All-Stars Hockey '98. Damn them all to Hades!



has sadly been lost here. D'oh!

There are a few redeeming features though. Electronic Arts rarely go wrong with the audio side of things and NHL '98 is no exception. The play-by-play commentary is some of the best we've ever heard in a sports sim, coupled with some excellent atmospheric sound effects and rink side music. And as we've come to expect from EA, the presentation of the reams of gameplay variations, options and stats is impeccable. So no complaints there then.





But at the end of the day, it would appear that the once mighty sports division of Electronic Arts has let Saturn owners down once again. The PlayStation and PC versions of NHL '98 have been available for some months now, ample time for EA's coders to make a decent stab at producing a reasonable Saturn rendition. But despite bearing all the same options, stats and NHL adornments, the untidy graphics and lacklustre frame rate are reason enough to steer well clear. Sega's own NHL All-Star Hockey '98 is far more worthy of our praise and I would recommend that over this poor effort.

LEE NUTTER

WHICH IS BEST?

With both Electronic Arts and Sega releasing their takes on the lucrative NHL licence this month, ice hockey fans are quite literally spoilt for choice. But which of the two is most worthy of purchase? Well, we would have to say that Sega's NHL All-Star Hockey '98 is by far and way the best of the two, comprehensively out-quaffing EA's pathetically weak competition. Though both games are almost identical to each other in terms of gameplay variations, options, tactical plays and statistics, the fast and fluid action of Sega's ice hockey sim coupled with some excellent visuals put it leagues ahead of EA's lacklustre port.



GRAPHICS	The appalling frame rate, low resolution textures and lack of translucent effects are a far cry from its PS brethren.	60%
SOUND	The atmospheric sound effects and play-by-play commentary are some of the best we've heard in a sports sim.	90%
PLAYABILITY	Whilst the cool gameplay has made it through, the choppy frame rate makes NHL Hockey '98 largely unplayable.	55%
LASTABILITY	There are plenty of gameplay variations, tactical plays and stats to peruse, but when it plays this badly why bother?	65%

OVERALL

A shambling mockery of its former self, NHL '98 rounds off EA's terrible winter line-up of sports titles.

62%

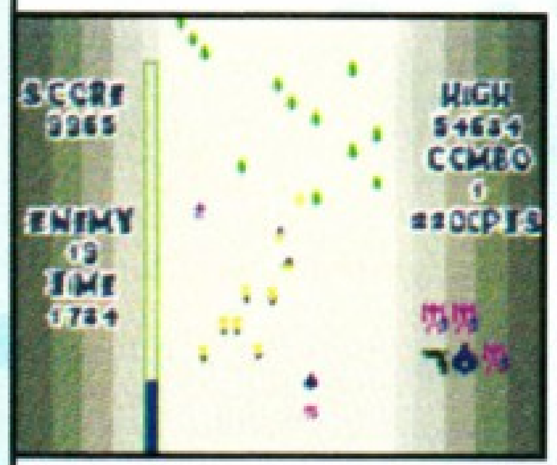
▼ Like most of EA's titles, it's not so much the game as the conversion which lets it down. Crazy fools.

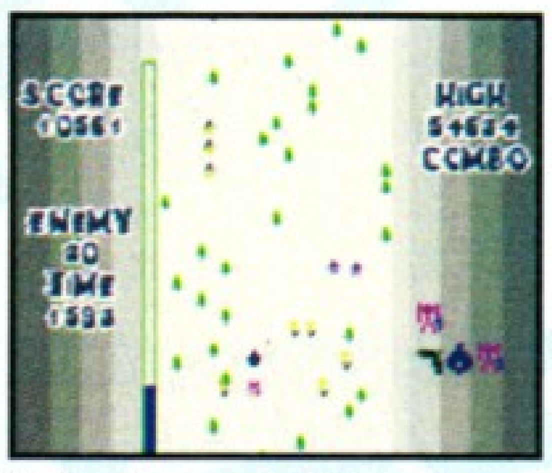


SEGA SATURN™ tips

With the number of Saturn games being released slowing a bit, it's becoming tough to fill the Tips pages - so we need your help! We've teamed-up with our friends at Blue Peter to launch the SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE Tips For Africa appeal. Your tips CAN make a difference! Just one level select could pay for a wheelchair, while a debug mode could pay for ten children to go to DisneyLand! Send your Tips to: Wheelchairs For Africa Tips Appeal, C/O Sega Saturn Magazine, 37-39 Millharbour, Isle of Dogs, London E14 9TZ

STEEP SLOPE SLIDERS

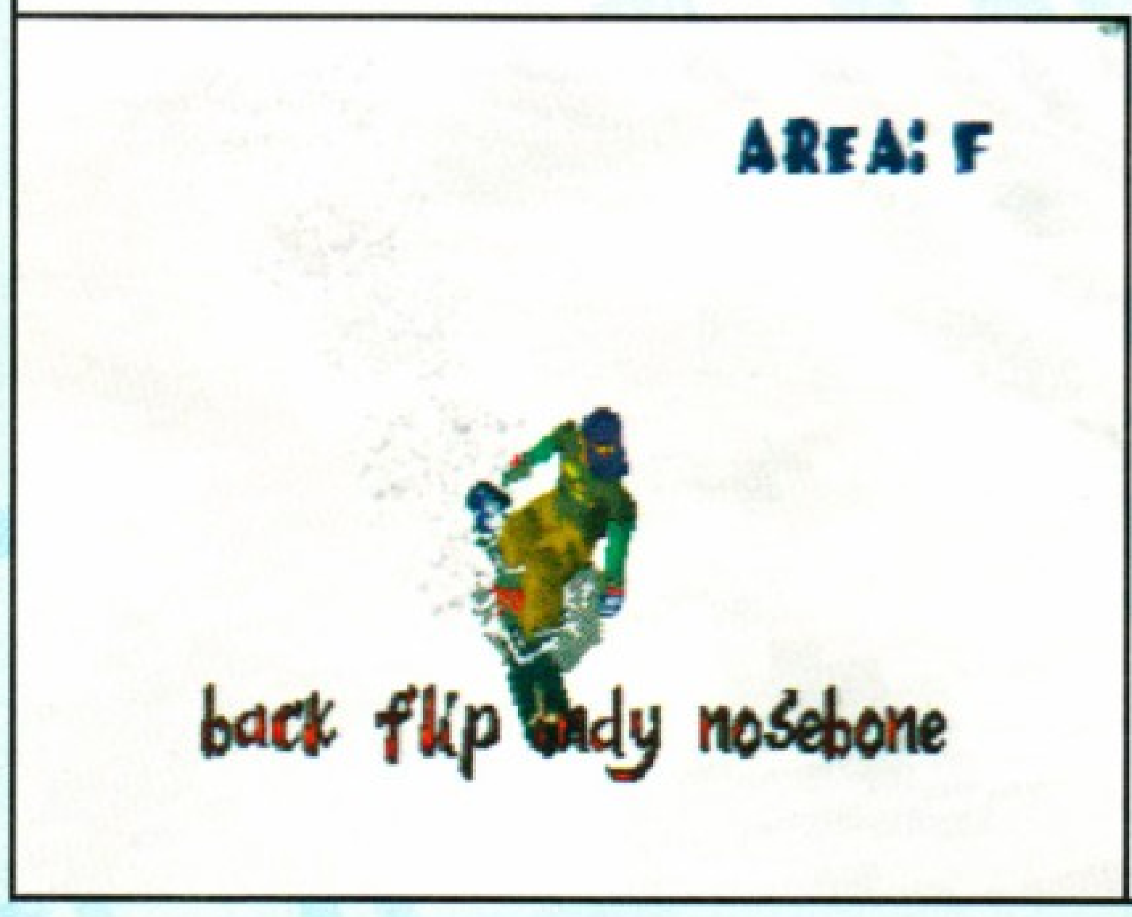




Hidden game alert! Steep Slope Sliders is ace, and there's even a cool hidden shoot 'em up in there as well...



STEEP SLOPE SHOOTERS!
You'll need to have earned all eight of the initial racers before using this cheat AND you need to have completed a course with each of 'em first. You casual boarders had better get practising if you want to play this hidden shooter.
After gaining and racing with the extra four racers, press and hold Top Left+Top Right+X+Y+Z+B+C at the 'Press Start' screen. Keep them held down, and press Start with any spare fingers you've got left (your nose will do). Keep the buttons held down and select the options menu with the A button. Then highlight Exit and press the A button again. The title screen for Steep Slope Shooters should now appear.





DUKE NUKEM

Lobotomy's plan to get people to buy Duke Nukem AND Quake by making über-multi-player game Death Tank only accessible by owning both games was a great idea - until now, because there's also a way to access DeathTank even if Duke Nukem is the only game you own!

ACCESS DEATHTANK THE HARD WAY
Start a new game (on any difficulty level) and make sure you destroy every single toilet and urinal as you play through the game. An epic task, but one well worth completing, as you should already know how highly we regard Lobotomy's excellent multi-playerDeathTank.







COMMAND & CONQUER

There's been a terrible omission in the long and glorious history of the SSM Tips page - we've never printed these codes for the excellent 94% rated Command & Conquer! Consider the situation rectified, soldier:

NUCLEAR BOMB
Oh yeah, now we're talking! Easy access to the awesome nuclear arsenal is provided by pressing ABCLDRULDRUA.

ION CANNON
Press ABCLDRULDRUB for some totally full-on ionised destruction.

AIR STRIKE
Nothing beats a good air strike, that's what I always say. Press ABCLDRULDRUC to witness the power.

ORCA LASER
You'll need to have built an Orca first, then press XYZRDLURDLUX.

EASY MONEY
No, not a description of my job, but a code to gain an extra $5000 in the game. Press RLABCZYXRL for the extra cash.

REVEAL MAP
Press UDRLAUDRLA to show the full area map. Not so exciting, but still useful.

TOXIC LAB
Press CRAZYBUBBA. Now players can build a toxic lab to create particularly nasty Visceroids.

EXTRA UNITS
After you've built a power plant and a barracks press YABBADABBADU. You can now build you your heart's content.

MECH WARRIOR 2

Another tragic omission from the past SSM Tips pages. Frustrated robot warriors worry no longer - here are some groovy Mech Warrior 2 codes. Type 'em in at the password screen:

Open all missions - T<XO/AXA<=
Extra weapons - T#XO/AX<<<
Extra heat sinks - #XXO/A4>Y+
Continuous throttle - #AXO/A4YYA
Invincibility - ##XO/A><UZ
Unlimited ammo - TOXO/AX>TU
No weight limit - #OXO/A>>O/
Jump jets - #YXO/A>YOL

SATURN SWITCH Q&A SPECIAL

To help you 'bone up' on the tricky subject of getting your Saturn switched, we've prepared this handy little Q&A special to answer all of the most popular Saturn switch questions. We aim to please you know.

Okay, we've been telling you it's a great idea to get your Saturn switched, but that just seems to have confused you all even more. What does it do? Where can you get it done? Read on...

What do I get for my money?
Most companies will fit two switches - a country switch which lets you chose between UK, Japanese or American settings for playing import games, and more importantly, there's the 50/60Hz speed switch which toggles between the two display modes.

So what does the 50/60Hz switch do?
This is the number one reason for getting your Saturn seen to - flipping the Saturn to 60Hz mode immediately gives you a full-screen display, removing the borders that some PAL games have. Which is pretty handy considering the rather lack-lustre PAL conversions which have been put out recently - Sonic R, Marvel Super Heroes and Steep Slope Sliders are even better when played at 60Hz, and all Japanese and American games are designed to run at this rate. Additionally, games run 17.5% faster too!



What about the converter cartridges you can buy?
They will allow you to play Japanese and US games on your bog-standard UK Saturn, but the display will be bordered - the cartridge doesn't come with a 50/60Hz switch, so you'll also be missing out on the chance to play the bordered PAL games at full-speed as well. It's handy as a 'quick fix' for running import games, but we really recommend going the whole hog and getting a switch fitted by your local games importer.

What about PAL optimised games like Sega Rally and Duke Nukem?









Simple - play them in PAL mode. Optimised games are just that - the code has been altered so the games run full-screen and full-speed on a PAL Saturn just as nature (and Sega) intended. They will run at 60Hz, but the display will be expanded even more, meaning that the top and bottom of the picture will be lost.

Do I have to buy Japanese games?
No! The main reason we advocate getting your Saturn switched is to allow players to play UK games full-screen and full-speed, to make games like Marvel Super Heroes and Sonic R even more of a joy to play... but only if your TV can handle the 60Hz signal.

So how can I tell if my TV is 60Hz compatible?
Hmm, tough one. Most TVs fitted with SCART sockets or made in the last five or six years will be okay, although it's very rare for the manufacturers to mention it either in the manual or on the back of the set. Try ringing the shop you bought the telly from, or even giving the manufacturers a call.

What if my TV isn't 60Hz compatible?
Don't worry - if you're planning to buy Japanese or American games they will still work at the regular 50Hz setting, but the games will be bordered and 17.5% slower than intended. To be honest, you probably won't notice this small speed loss (unless you've already played the game at full-speed), but it kind of defeats the object of the whole exercise if you're still restricted to playing everything at the standard 50Hz mode.



So I should probably buy a new telly then?
Yes! If you're still using a wobbly RF lead connected to an ancient TV you're missing out on a much, much sharper display, and even the sound comes across much clearer when coming through a SCART lead. And most new TVs have stereo sound too!

Here's a tough one - what does PAL stand for?
You can't catch us out that easily. PAL stands for Phased Alternate Line.

Will the switch break my Saturn?
Well, we've all got our personal Saturns switched and the office machines have also been tinkered with, and we've not had any problems yet. Of course, it will invalidate your warranty, so think twice if you're an obsessive worrier with a new machine. Otherwise, go for it!

Will it break my TV?
If your TV can't take a 60Hz signal you'll just get a flickering display when running the Saturn at 60Hz. Don't panic - your telly WILL NOT explode in a huge fireball killing you and your family, you'll just have to revert back to standard PAL mode.

Will it change my life?
Probably, yes. Owning a switched Saturn shows that you're someone who knows what you want, and you're not afraid to go out of your way to achieve the very best. You're confident, in control of your





environment and a master of technology. Well, maybe not, but you'll be able to get rid of the borders on Marvel, Steep Slope, X-Men COTA and Sonic R, plus have the option of beefing up your games collection with a few of the cooler import titles.

Cool. Where can I get it done?
Most independent import shops will do it for you, but if there are none near where you live try giving these companies a ring. You'll have to pay an extra five or six quid to post the Saturn to them, along with the actual price of the operation (between £25 and £40 - shop around), but if you're serious about your Saturn gaming, it's a small price to pay...

Computer Exchange (London): 0171 636 2666
Raven Games (London): 0181 663 6822
Game Raiders (london): 0171 434 2220
Project K (Essex): 0181 508 1328

This obviously isn't meant to be a definitive list of UK switch fitters - check your phonebook for import companies in your area. You won't have to trust your Saturn to the Post Office...

CROC GUIDE PART 1

Here's the first part of SSM's complete Croc guide. We know you've had a lot of fun with Fox Interactive's 3D platform hero, but have you found all of the game's secrets yet? MATT YEO gets to grip with this rascally reptile as his journey begins...

FOREST ISLAND

LEVEL 1-1: AND SO THE ADVENTURE BEGINS...

At the start of the level, immediately turn around until you see a Red Dantini circling in front of a boulder. Approach it and the pesky critter attacks. Tail-whip or stomp him, head behind the boulder and collect the hidden crystal. Once you have the crystal, turn back and head for the tree stump. Here you'll find your first Gobbo. Grab him and turn turn to the lest to collect the Red Crystal on the box. Now stomp on the stump to open up the hidden well. Grab the Blue Crystal then jump on the platform to cross over the lava. Watch out for the collapsing platforms on the way, as well as the fireballs. Collect the extra life then smash the box to free the Gobbo. Head out of the well to the surface and across the log to the doorway.

Once through the door, hop across the pit and turn to face the platforms over the lava pond. Hop across the platforms carefully, making sure to grab all of the crystals. Reach the box on the other side and free the third Gobbo. Enter the next door. Turn right and head toward the Exit Gong, but watch out for the tunnelling worm. As you approach the Gong, you'll see the fourth Gobbo on a platform to your left. Grab him and head back to the door. Dodge the Well Snake



▲ Make sure you stock up on crystals early in each level.

then leap down the hole. When you fall down the well, you'll see a stretch of lava with breakaway platforms to cross it with. Quickly bounce across and eliminate the two Dantinis on the other side. Jump up and grab the edge of the floating box. Collect the Yellow Crystal, stomp the box and drop down to collect the fifth Gobbo.

Return to the surface and head toward the Rainbow Door. Enter and you'll emerge onto a spacious cliff. Jump on the right-hand jelly to collect the Silver Key. Leap up and let the balloon carry you across the chasm. Unlock the cage to collect the sixth Gobbo. Jump on the jelly to collect a Free Life Heart then smash the Gong the complete the level.















▲ Time your jumps to avoid the lethal fireballs.

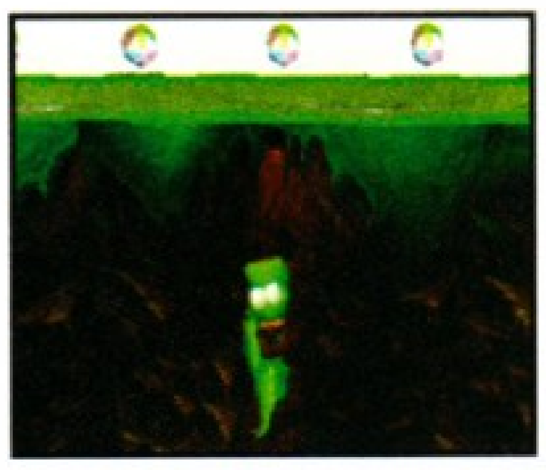


▲ Another Gobbo rescued, a step closer to a secret level.



▲ What's pink and hard and blocks your passage..?

LEVEL 1-2: UNDERGROUND OVER GROUND



At the start of the level, two boxes sit in front of you. Just past the right-hand box you'll see a lighter-coloured strip in the rock wall with a series of holes in it. Head over there and climb up. At the top, turn right and follow the trail of White Crystals until you turn and face a Spark Dantini throws at you. As you round the bend, you'll see a well ahead. Stomp on it and fall in. When you land, you'll see another well and two pairs of boxes to your left and right. Head right and use the box on the ground to reach the floating box. Break open the box on the ground after breaking the floating box. Grab the Yellow Crystal. Now head to the left set of boxes. Use the box on the ground to jump to the platform above the lava to collect Free Life. Then use it again to reach the Pink Crystal on the floating box. Stomp the box on the ground to reveal a Gobbo.

Now enter the doorway near where you first landed. You'll come out on a platform and see a balloon in front of you. Grab the balloon and ride it down to the floor below. You'll land near a Gobbo in a cage and a series of step platforms. Head up the step platforms. You'll see two boxes on the ground and a platform above them. Use one box to get onto the platform and collect the Silver Key. Watch out for the Red Dantini guarding the boxes. Head down the step platforms and release the second Gobbo in the cage. Turn and stomp the two boxes under the step platforms and grab the third Gobbo. Head back up the step platforms and stomp the two boxes there to find the Green Crystal. Look out for the Red Dantini on the way!



Turn and enter the door. When you come out, turn immediately right and jump to the platform to collect the Blue Crystal. Now jump back down and head for the platform left of the doorway you entered through. There you'll find the fourth Gobbo. Carry on and use the rotating platforms to cross the lava pool. Just past the Primary exit Gong you'll see a box. Stomp on it to reveal the fifth Gobbo and then turn and head through the Rainbow Door. Inside, use the familiar jellies to bounce your way up to a set of Monkey Bars. Then turn and bounce again to reach the top of a high cliff. Follow the cliff to the right and jump onto the stacked boxes. Use Croc's stomp attack to destroy all the boxes. In the last one you'll find the final Gobbo. Head for the Gong and exit the level.



▲ Maybe some kind of key-shaped item would work here?

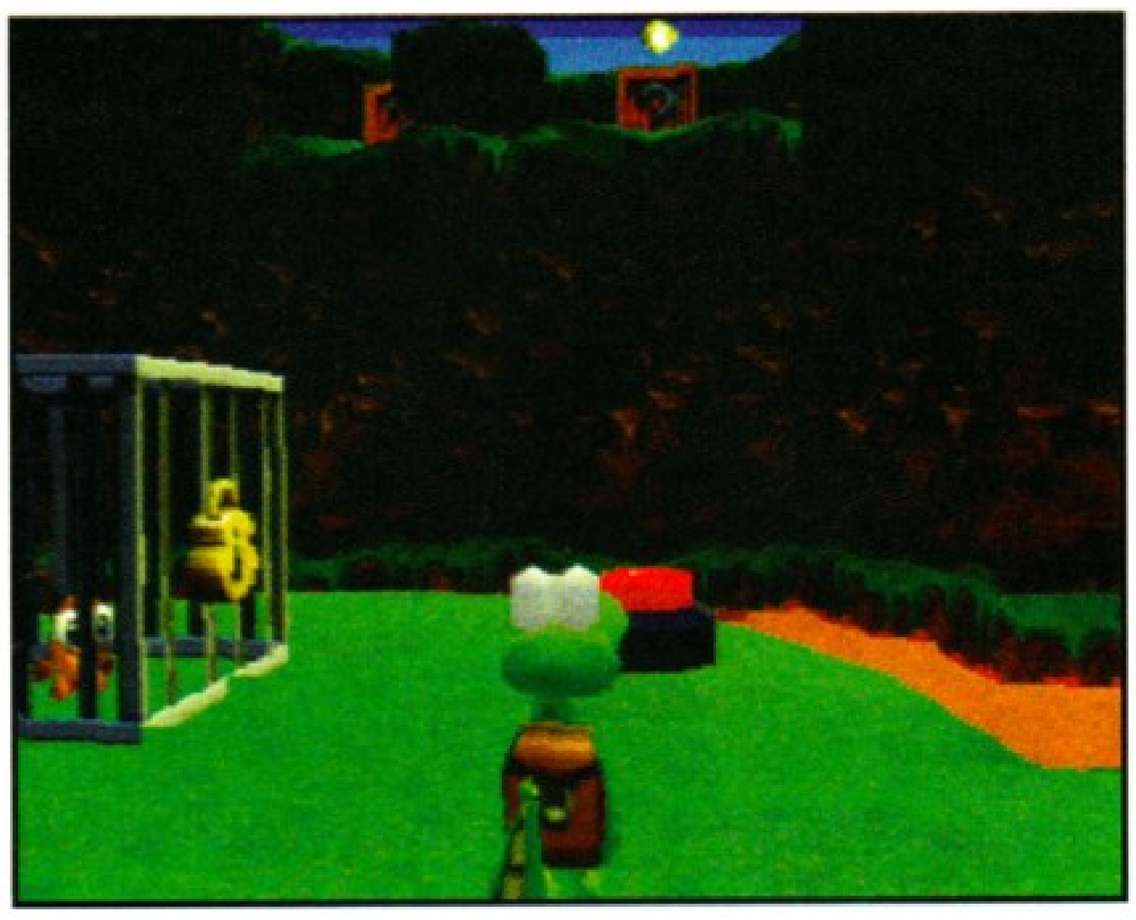



▲ Explore all areas of each level in order to find items.

LEVEL 1-3: SHOUTIN' LAVA, LAVA, LAVA!

Head out onto the fallen log bridge. About halfway across you'll see an Arrow Platform on your right. Jump onto it and step on either side of the arrow to make it move. Head out over the lava until the platform hits the rock wall then jump into the air to grab a camouflaged Red Crystal. Cross back over the bridge and go stomp the box between the two large upright rocks. Inside you'll find a Gobbo. Just past the first Gobbo you'll find a red switch on the ground. Jump onto it to reveal a series of platforms crossing the lava pool. Jump across them and up onto the well on the other side. Stomp on it and fall in.

Inside the well you'll see one of three boxes conceals a Gobbo. It's time to play the shell game! After the boxes finish rotating, guess which box the Gobbo's in. A wrong guess gets you a Free Life, but naturally you'd prefer to win the Gobbo. Get on the elevator and head back up. Enter the doorway. On the other side you'll see a box that Croc can push anywhere on the grey stone floor. Before pushing it, use it to reach the first platform and grab the Green Crystal. Push it again to the second platform and grab the Gold Key. Push it again to the third platform above the other door to grab the third Gobbo. Now get down and push the block back to the first platform where you found the Green Crystal. Jump to the platform. On the cliff you'll find a locked doorway that your new Gold Key will open. Pass through the door and you'll see a series of boxes forming stairs. On top you'll find a well, the fourth Gobbo and the Blue Crystal.

Stomp back down the boxes and head back out the door. Jump down to where the Push Box is and proceed through the door to your left. When you emerge, you'll find a caged Gobbo and red switch. Activate the switch to operate a floating platform that lifts Croc to the cliff above. Here you'll find the Yellow and Pink Crystals. Grab them and head toward the Primary Exit Gong. You'll find the Silver Key to the Gobbo's cage hidden behind it. Get the key and release the Gobbo. Use the red switch again to activate the platform. Head up top and through the Rainbow Door. On the other side you'll see a red switch in front of three open tree stumps. Activate the switch to begin a sheep-stomping game. When you hit the switch, as set of three platforms, each with an arrow pointing to a different tree stump, will appear. Stomp on these platforms to hit the sheep in the stumps. If you stomp enough sheep, you get the final Gobbo. If you fail, you receive some Free Lives. When the game is over, head to the Beany Gong and exit.



▲ Use the logs and arrow platforms to avoid a lava bath.



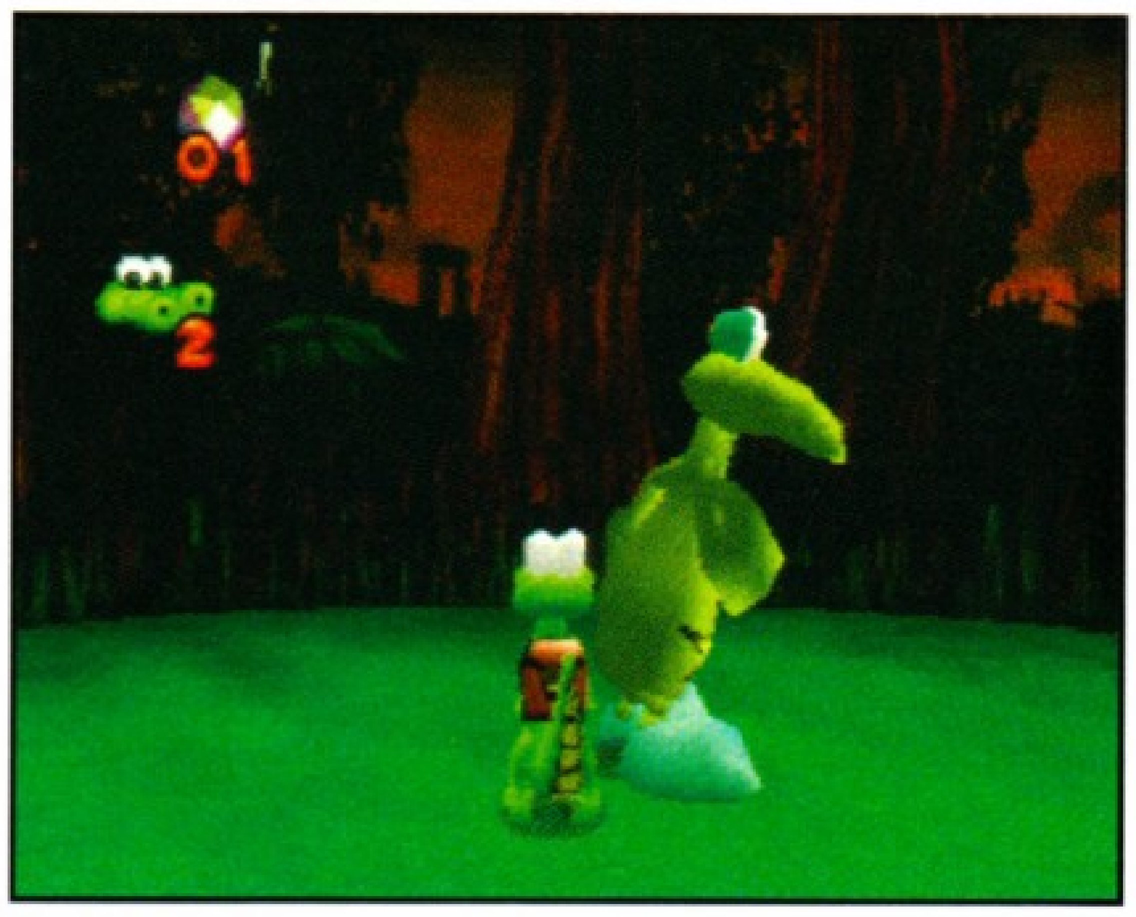

▲ Keep an eye on the Gobbo box (left) as it moves around.

BOSS LEVEL 1: LAIR OF THE FEEBLE

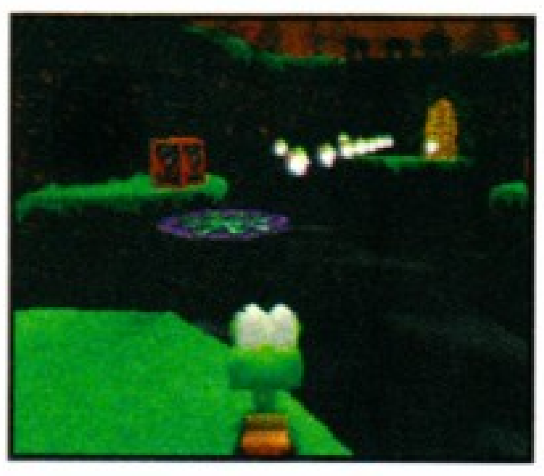
The level begins with Croc facing an Arrow Multlplatform. When you're on the platform, it travels automatically in whatever direction you face. Jump on and guide yourself to the various platforms and collect some White Crystals and a Free Life. Float over to the doorway on the opposite end. Pass through and down the narrow hallway filled with small lava pits and enemies to another doorway at the end. Pass through it and enter the Lair of the Feeble.

The Feeble follows you for a little while. When he gets close, he'll peck at you with his beak. Dodge this attack and he'll sit and wave his hands for a second or two. While he waves his hands, move in toward him and tail-whip his butt! This is the only time he's vulnerable so time your move carefully. When you've hit him, run away and dodge him until he sits down again. Repeat this method until he's finished.





▲ This guy is soooo easy to beat, it's embarrassing.









SECRET LEVEL 1: THE CURVY CAVERNS

Welcome to the first of the elusive Special Levels. If you're here, you've rescued all 18 Gobbos in the previous three levels. Congratulations! In this level, you only objective is to locate one of the eight hidden Jigsaw Pieces. Anything you grab in the process is bonus material.

At the start of the level, hop across the lava pool and head down the tunnel. At the end, walk left around the pool to the arrow Platform. Hop on and ride it across the lava, taking care to avoid the fireballs that fly up. At the other side, hop off and head into the tunnel. Follow it to a door and head on through. On the other side, turn left and follow the path through the next doorway. Follow the path of little platforms around the corner above the lava. When you reach the other shore, run up the hill and grab the Silver Key above the stack of boxes. Now, turn right and head uphill and enter the door on the right.

Follow the path down to a branch in the road above the lava. Go straight for now. You'll be back to take the left path later. Continue around the corner and through the door. On the other side, grab some White Crystals from the boxes next to the lava pool and then proceed across the lava via the rotating platforms. On the other side, hop down and follow the tunnel to the right and across more lava pools to reach the Gold Key. Return to the room's entrance and go through the door. Retrace your steps to the stack of boxes where you grabbed the first Silver Key, turn left and head down the hill, across the lava and through the door. On the other side, you'll see a box to the left, across a wide river of lava. Continue down the path ahead to a caged switch on your left. Hop over to it and open the cage. Step on the switch to reveal a platform leading to the box across the lava. Hop over the box to find a Free Life.

Retrace your steps to the branching path above the lava river. Now take the path to the left across the tiny platforms floating above the river. Continue across the platforms and up the vertically rotating platforms to the Jigsaw Piece. If you've collected the Gold Key you can enter the door left of the Jigsaw Piece and grab a couple of Free Lives from the two tall towers. Climb the rotating platforms as they mesh together to reach them then hop back down and grab the Jigsaw Piece to complete the level.



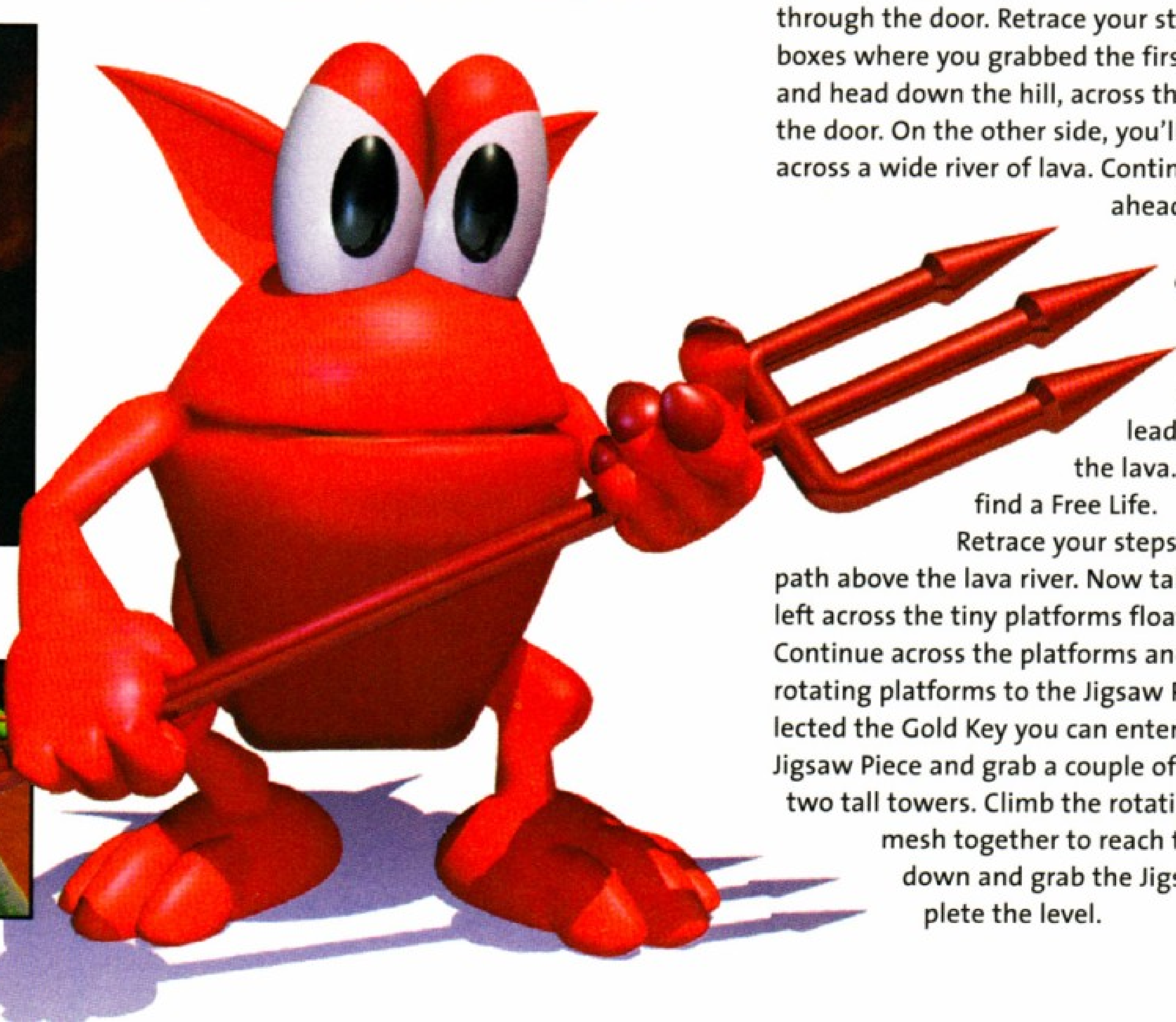




▲ Your first secret level just waiting to be explored. Stock up on extra lives and crystals.







LEVEL 1-4: THE TUMBLING DANTINI






At the start of the level you'll see a floating box with several White Crystals below it and a Gold Key above. Run over and garb all the crystals including the hidden Red Crystal. Jump up onto the box and grab the Gold Key. Stomp on the floating box then fall down and collect the first Gobbo. Turn and face the doorway. You'll see two rock ladders on either side of the door. Use a ladder to climb to the top of the cliff. When you get there, turn to see a box in front of the doorway. Stomp on the box to reveal the Green Crystal then head through the door.



▲ One of the crystals in front contains a special item...




On the other side you'll see a pit with a red breakaway bridge crossing to the other side, where a box awaits. Get on the bridge and stop in the middle. Let the bridge break and you'll fall onto the floating box. Smash it and collect the next Gobbo. Exit through the door. Turn and head back up the ladder to the cliff above and go through the door again. This time, use the red breakaway bridge and cross to the other side. Proceed down the tunnel watching your step and taking care to jump over the two lava pits. You'll find yourself in a room similar to the one you were just in, except where there was a bridge, there's now an Arrow Multiplatform. Jump onto the platform and use a Jumping Tail Whip to take out the Flying Dantini. Now use the platform to reach the platforms on your left and right. In the left box you'll find the Blue Crystal and in the right there's the third Gobbo.



▲ Guide the platform to reach the boxes safely.



Head for the door on the other side. You're now on a cliff and there's another section below you to the left. Run straight ahead and grab the crystals: One of them is a camouflaged Yellow Crystals. Turn and use your Gold Key to proceed through the locked door. On the other side you'll see two boxes. Stomp the left one to reveal the Pink Crystal. Jump to the Arrow Multiplatform and proceed across the lava until you reach the other side and the fourth Gobbo. Jump back to the platform, across the lava and exit the room. Turn to the right to see a balloon waiting for you. Jump on the balloon and ride it down to the lower section. You'll drop immediately in front of the Primary Exit Gong.

Turn left to see the fifth Gobbo sitting on a small platform above the lava. Jump to the platform, grab the Gobbo, jump back and head through the Rainbow Door. On the other side you'll see a pit with what looks like a flat bridge of boxes crossing to the back wall. The last Gobbo is in the first box. Stomp it, collect the Gobbo and hit the Gong.

LEVEL 1-5: CAVE FEAR




You start the level inside a cave next to a Push Box. Hop onto the box and up onto the platform to grab the Green Crystal. Jump down and push the box along the floor to the corner. From the top of the box, jump over and up onto the Monkey Bars to find the Red Crystal and a switch. Grab the Crystal, turn toward the platform where you grabbed the Green Crystal and jump on the switch. To the left there's another platform above the lava. Jump down and follow the shore to the platform area. Jump on and ride it to the top to find the first Gobbo. Jump down to the floor, turn right and head through the door in the back corner.

On the other side you'll see a balloon. Ride it down to the level below. You'll land on a small platform. Pick up the Blue Crystal. Turn around and jump onto the Arrow Moving Platform. Jump off on the other side of the lava pool and just inside the tunnel entrance you'll find another Gobbo. Follow the tunnel through the door. Turn left to see that you're in a cross-shaped room. The exit is opposite you. Head for the left section to find the third Gobbo. Cross the lava to the other section to find the Yellow Crystal. Head back to the centre, turn and head through the doorway. You'll see the Rainbow Door ahead, but you're still one crystal short! You'll find the Pink Crystal behind the Primary Exit Gong.



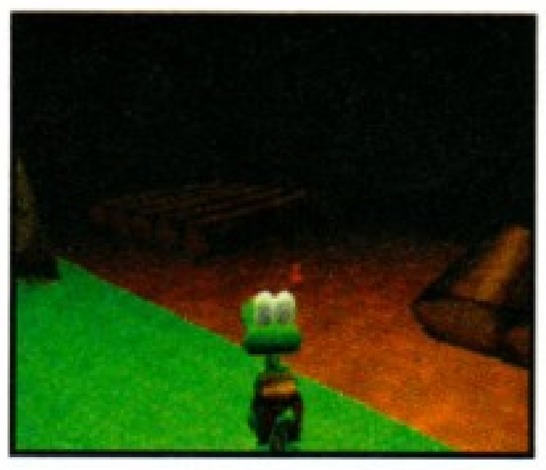


Grab it, head back to the left and cross the breakaway bridge. Turn past the caged Gobbo ahead and ride the Arrow Multiplatform across the gorge to collect a Silver Key and the fourth Gobbo. Ride back on the platform and rescue the caged Gobbo. Go through the Rainbow Door. You'll see a series of floating boxes arranged as a staircase. Don't smash any of them just yet. Instead, use them to climb to the top. Once there. jump to the straight, vertical stack of boxes. Don't stomp these either. On the other side of those boxes is the Silver Key. Fall off the boxes and grab the key. Smash all the boxes, free the Gobbo and exit the level.

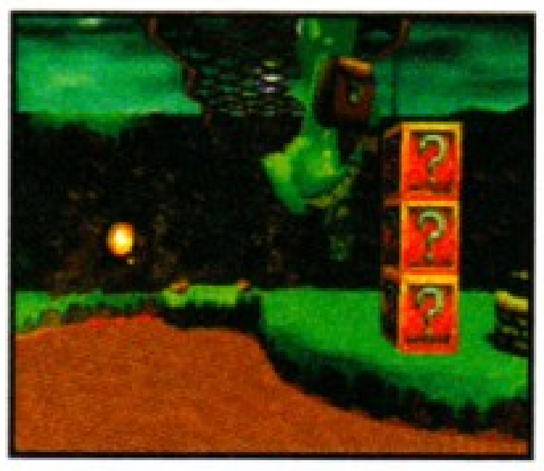
LEVEL 1-6: DARKNESS DESCENDS

Cross the log and grab the White Crystals from the box. Jump and hang from the Monkey Bars and swing over to the next land section. Here you'll see a covered well and three stacked boxes. Jump to the well, over the boxes and to the Monkey Bars. Follow the platform along and grab the Green and Red Crystals. Follow the platform back and jump down onto the boxes. Stomp them and pick up the first Gobbo. Jump to the well and fall in. Approach the box in front of you and it will move. The trick is to chase it a wall and perform a stomp just as it bounces off the bricks. If timed correctly you'll land on the rebounding box and collect another Gobbo.









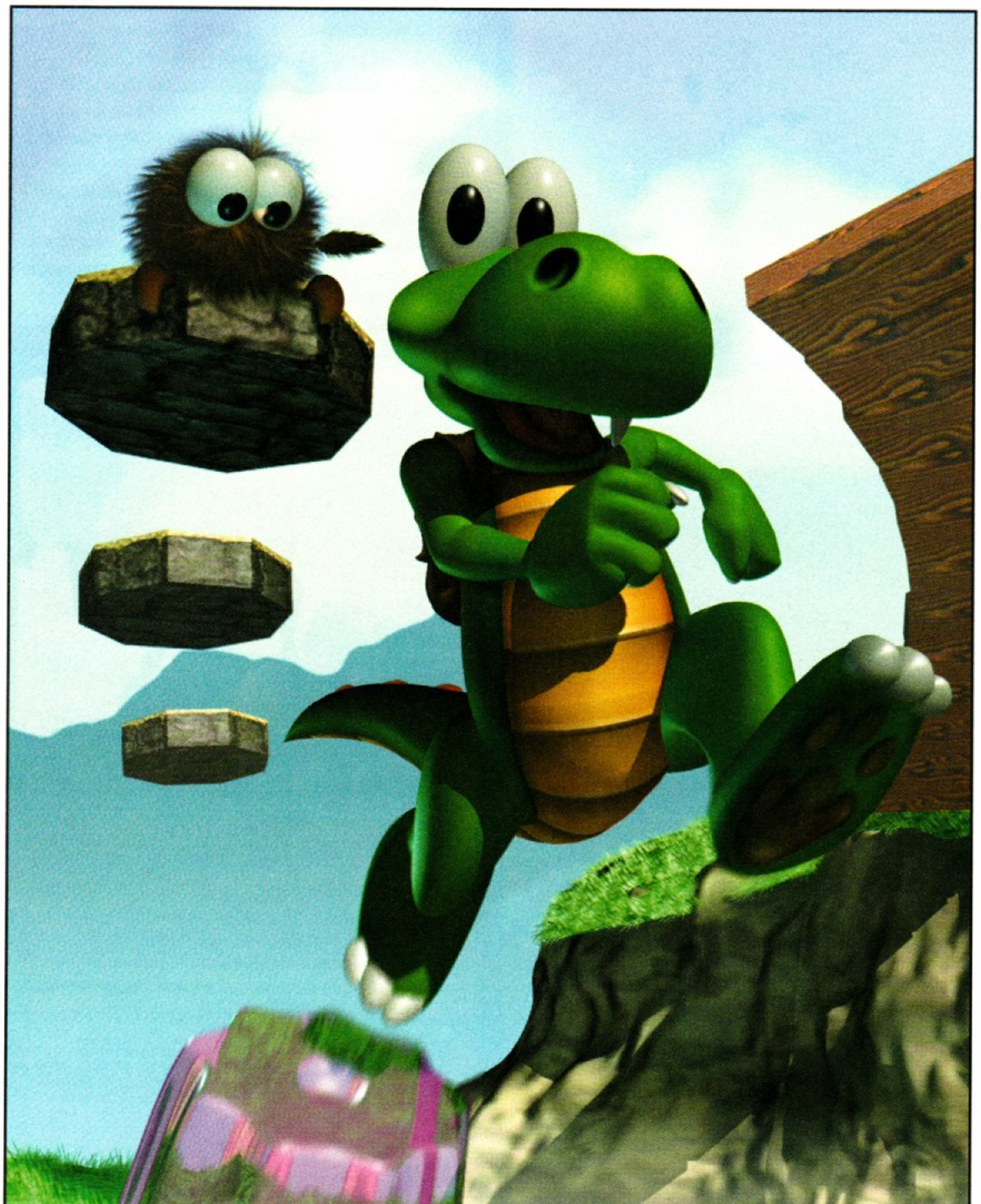
▲ Moving boxes and rickety platforms await our hero.

Return to the surface and use the nearby Arrow Platform to cross over to the door. Use the lava rafts to travel upstream. To the right are platforms containing Blue and Yellow Crystals. Continue up the lava river and stomp on the box near the door to find the third Gobbo. Go through the door and you'll enter a small cove that seems to have no way out. Step away from the door and turn toward it to find the rock ladder leading to the second level. At the top, turn right until you see the box on this level. Smash it open and collect the fourth Gobbo. Turn around and head up the floating platforms to reach the third level. Stomp the box to find the fifth Gobbo.

Turn to the lava falls and you'll see a Jelly. Use it to leap up the fourth platform and snatch up the Pink Crystal. Fall off the platform and land below. Enter the Rainbow Door and inside you'll see the Gong and a large pond. Jump in for a swim and follow the trail of crystals down the tunnel. There you'll find the last Gobbo trapped in a bubble. Return to the first tunnel and go back to the surface. Hit the Gong and exit.



▲ Always use Croc's camera feature to check out the level.





▲ Can someone turn on the lights? Watch your step here.





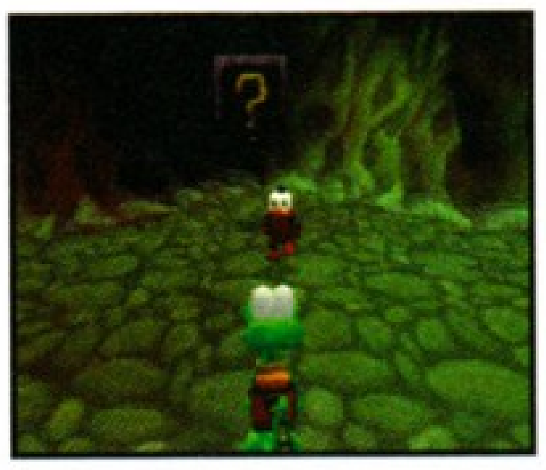
▲ The first of many challenging underwater stages.

BOSS LEVEL 2: FIGHT NIGHT WITH FLIBBY

Use the rotating platforms to get across this section, grabbing the White Crystals as you go. On the other side there are two floating boxes. Kill the enemies and grab the crystals from the boxes. Just past the boxes lies a pool of lava. A breakaway platform and a series of rotating platforms provide the only way across. Get across them, enter the door and prepare to face Flibby!

To begin with, Flibby will walk toward you slowly. When he's close enough, he'll take a swing at you. Dodge the attack and wait for him to start panting. When he does, run to him and use Croc's tail-whip attack. When Flibby falls down, jump on him. When he gets up he'll add a new attack to his arsenal. He'll move slowly to you again, but this time he'll either swing at you or put his fists together to smash you down. Knock him down and he'll gain yet another attack. This time he flings his arms wildly for a second or two. Dodge his attacks again. Once he throws a punch and misses, repeat the stomach crunching attack and he'll be defeated in no time!

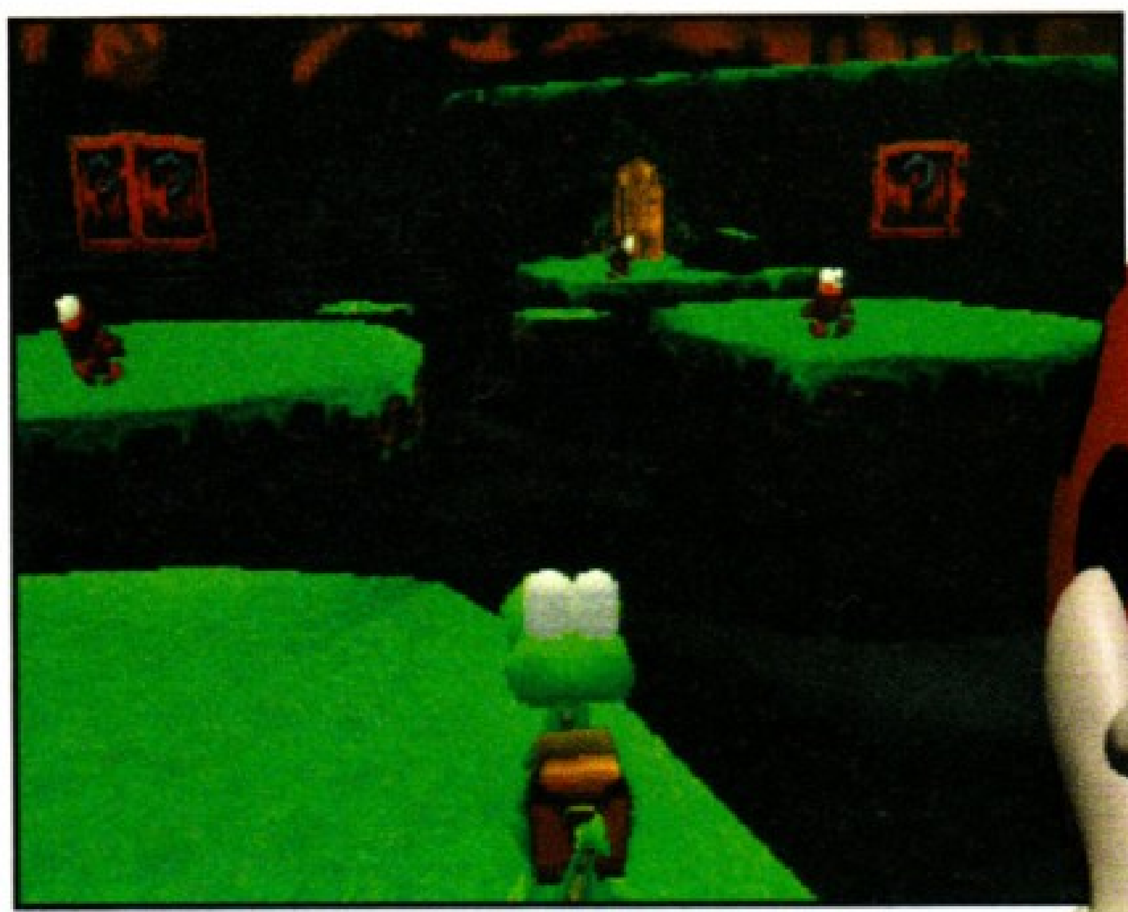




▲ Defeat all pesky Dantinis with a swift tail-swipe.



▲ Take your time on the moving platforms or else!









SECRET LEVEL 2: THE TWISTY TUNNELS

This secret level opens with Croc in a cavern room facing a tunnel. Kill the Fire Jumpy guarding the entrance. Follow the tunnel around the corner to the right until it ends at the entrance to another room. Just in front of you and to the right is a box. Resting on top is the Gold Key. Grab it, turn left and hop across the lava pools to the tunnel. Follow it along and enter the door. Turn left and hop across the platforms over the lava. Collect the White Crystals and kill the Fire Jumpy at the top of the hill. Head across the floating platforms to the base of the second hill. Head to the top and through the door.

Walk to the lava pool and jump up to the first floating platform. Jump to the next and then to the stretching platform below. Jump to the last platform and ride it to the top of the cliff. You'll see the Jigsaw Piece on your right, but first head to the locked door in the back wall. You'll see a tower of rock with a spiral staircase surrounding it. Climb up it and locate the moving platform with the Free Lives on it. Grab them, jump down, collect the Jigsaw Piece and exit. Congratulations, you've completed the first world!

TO BE CONTINUED...









▲ Secret level No 2. Another chance to collect freebies.



▲ Discovered the Missing Head mode yet? Ha, what a hoot!





▲ There'll be more platform larks in next month's guide!



Mortal Kombat Trilogy: FATALITY GUIDE

To help you hack and slash your way through Mortal Kombat Trilogy, we're printing a complete guide to all character finishing moves. Every gory Fatality and cheery Friendship has been checked and double-checked for accuracy, so please... no annoying phone calls!

CHARACTER MOVES KEY	
U	Up
D	Down
F	Forwards
B	Backwards
HP	High Punch
LP	Low Punch
HK	High Kick
LK	Low Kick
BLK	Block
R	Run

FATALITIES
The distance in brackets before each Fatality tells you exactly how far away from your opponent you need to stand for the finishing move to work.

FRIENDSHIPS AND BABALITIES
You can now block during the last round and still be able to perform Friendships and Babalities. Just stand anywhere on-screen (unless otherwise indicated) and key in the commands.

ANIMALITIES
You can only do Animalities after performing a Mercy on someone, then beating them again.

MERCY
To give Mercy, hold R and press D, D, then release R when outside jump distance. The fight must have gone to three rounds for it to work.

BRUTALITIES
At the "Finish Him/Her!" message, move close to your opponent and press the sequence of hits (usually 10/11) quickly. If you keep the pace up, the screen will darken and the computer will do another 20-odd hits to finish them off!

PIT FATALITIES
Perform the Pit Fatality when close to your opponent on any of these stages: Scorpion's Lair, Shao Kahn's Tower, The Subway, The Pit III, The Dead Pool (Hold D on both controllers afterwards for a funny voice!), The Kombat Tomb The Pit 1 (Just do an uppercut for a pit finish)



BARAKA

FATALITY 1: (Close) Hold BLK, tap B, B, B, HP, release BLK
FATALITY 2: (Close) B, F, D, F, LP
FRIENDSHIP: D, F, HK
BABALITY: F, F, F, HK
ANIMALITY: (Sweep) Hold HP, tap F, B, D, F, release HP
BRUTALITY: HP, HP, HP, LP, LP, BLK, HK, HK, LK, LK, BLK
PIT: LK, R, R, R, R



CYRAX

FATALITY 1: D, D, U, D, HP
FATALITY 2: (Close) D, D, F, U, R
FRIENDSHIP: R, R, R, U
BABALITY: F, F, B, HP
ANIMALITY: (Close) U, U, D, D
BRUTALITY: HP, HK, HP, HK, HK, HP, HK, HP, HK, LK, LP
PIT: R, BLK, R



JAX

FATALITY 1: (Close) Hold BLK tap U, D, F, U, release BLK
FATALITY 2: (Full screen) R, BLK, R, R, LK
FRIENDSHIP: LK, R, R, LK
BABALITY: D, D, D, LK
ANIMALITY: (Close) Hold LP, tap F, F, D, F, release LP
BRUTALITY: HP, HP, HP, BLK, LP, HP, HP, HP, BLK, LP, HP
PIT: D, F, D, LP



ERMAC

FATALITY 1: (Close) R, BLK, R, R, HK
FATALITY 2: (Sweep) D, U, D, D, D, BLK
FRIENDSHIP: F, F, F, HP
BABALITY: D, D, B, B, HP
ANIMALITY: (Close) F, F, B, B, LK
BRUTALITY: HP, HP, LP, BLK, HK, LK, BLK, HP, LP, LK, HK
PIT: R, R, R, R, LK



JADE

FATALITY 1: (Close) R, R, R, BLK, R
FATALITY 2: (Close) U, U, D, F, HP
FRIENDSHIP: B, D, B, B, HK
BABALITY: D, D, F, D, HK
ANIMALITY: (Close) F, D, F, F, LK
BRUTALITY: HP, LK, HP, LP, HK, HK, LK, BLK, BLK, HP, HK
PIT: B, F, D, R



CLASSIC JAX

FATALITY 1: (Close) Hold LP, tap F, F, F, release LP
FATALITY 2: (One step away) BLK, BLK, BLK, BLK, HP
FRIENDSHIP: D, D, U, U, LK
BABALITY: D, U, D, U, LK
ANIMALITY: N/A
BRUTALITY: HP, HP, BLK, HK, LP, LP, HP, BLK, HK, HK, HK
PIT: U, U, D, LK



JOHNNY CAGE

FATALITY 1: (Close) D, D, F, F, LP
FATALITY 2: (Close) D, D, F, F, LK
FRIENDSHIP: D, D, D, D, LK
BABALITY: F, B, B, HK
ANIMALITY: (Close) D, F, F, HK
BRUTALITY: HP, LK, HK, LP, HP, HK, HK, HP, HP, LP, HP
PI: D, B, F, F, HK



KABAL

FATALITY 1: (Close) R, BLK, BLK, BLK, HK
FATALITY 2: (Half screen away) D, D, B, F, BLK
FRIENDSHIP: (Outside sweep) R, LK, R, R, U
BABALITY: R, R, LK
ANIMALITY: (Close) Hold HP, tap F, F, D, F, release HP
BRUTALITY: HP, BLK, LK, LK, LK, HK, LP, LP, LP, HP, LP
PIT: BLK, BLK, HK



KANO

FATALITY 1: (Close) Hold LP, tap F, D, D, F, release LP
FATALITY 2: (Sweep) LP, BLK, BLK, HK
FRIENDSHIP: LK, R, R, HK **BABALITY:** F, F, D, D, LK
ANIMALITY: (Close) Hold HP, tap BLK, BLK, BLK, release HP
BRUTALITY: HP, LP, BLK, LP, HP, BLK, HK, LK, BLK, HK, LK
PIT: U, U, B, LK



KITANA

FATALITY 1: (Close) R, R, BLK, BLK, LK
FATALITY 2: (Close) B, D, F, F, HK
FRIENDSHIP: D, B, F, F, LP **BABALITY:** F, F, D, F, HK
ANIMALITY: (One Step Away) D, D, D, D, R
BRUTALITY: HP, HP, BLK, HK, BLK, LK, BLK, HP, BLK, HP, BLK
PIT: F, D, D, LK



KUNG LAO

FATALITY 1: (Anywhere) R, BLK, R, BLK, D
FATALITY 2: (One step away) F, F, B, D, HP
FRIENDSHIP: (Outside sweep) R, LP, R, LK
BABALITY: D, F, F, HP
ANIMALITY: (Close) R, R, R, R, BLK
BRUTALITY: HP, LP, LK, HK, BLK, HP, LP, LK, HK, BLK, HP
PIT: D, D, F, F, LK



CLASSIC KANO

FATALITY 1: (Close) B, D, F, LP
FRIENDSHIP: N/A
BABALITY: N/A
ANIMALITY: N/A
BRUTALITY: HP, HP, BLK, HK, HK, LK, HK, HP, HP, LP, HP
PIT: B, F, F, BLK



LIU KANG

FATALITY 1: F, F, D, D, LK
FATALITY 2: (Anywhere) U, D, U, U, BLK + R together
FRIENDSHIP: (Anywhere) R, R, R, D + R together
BABALITY: D, D, D, HK **ANIMALITY:** (Sweep) D, D, U
BRUTALITY: HP, LP, HP, BLK, LK, HK, LK, HK, LP, LP, HP
PIT: R, BLK, BLK, LK



CLASSIC KUNG LAO

FATALITY 1: (Full screen) Hold LP, tap B, B, F, release LP
FATALITY 2: (Sweep) Hold BLK, tap F, F, F, HP
FRIENDSHIP: B, B, D, HK
BABALITY: F, F, B, B, HK
BRUTALITY: HP, LP, HK, HK, LP, LP, LP, LK, LK, BLK, HP
PIT: F, F, F, HP



MILEENA

FATALITY 1: (Close) D, F, D, F, LP
FATALITY 2: (Full screen) B, B, B, F, LK
FRIENDSHIP: D, D, B, F, HP
BABALITY: D, D, F, F, HP
ANIMALITY: (Close) F, D, D, F, HK
BRUTALITY: HP, LP, LP, HP, BLK, HK, LK, HK, BLK, HP, LP
PIT: D, D, D + LP together



NIGHTWOLF

FATALITY 1: (Half Screen Away) B, B, D, HP
FATALITY 2: (Close) U, U, B, F, BLK
FRIENDSHIP: (Outside sweep) R, R, R, D
BABALITY: F, B, F, B, LP
ANIMALITY: (Close) F, F, D, D
BRUTALITY: HP, HP, HK, LK, LK, BLK, BLK, LP, LP, HP, HK
PIT: R, R, BLK



NOOB SAIBOT

FATALITY 1: (Sweep) B, B, F, F, HK
FATALITY 2: (Close) D, D, U, R
FRIENDSHIP: (Full Screen Away) F, F, B, HP
BABALITY: F, F, F, LP
ANIMALITY: (Sweep) B, F, B, F, HK
BRUTALITY: HP, LK, LP, BLK, LK, HK, HP, LP, BLK, LK, HK
PIT: D, F, BLK



RAIN

FATALITY 1: (Close) F, F, D + HP together
FATALITY 2: (Half Screen Away) D, D, B, F, HK
FRIENDSHIP: F, F, F, LP
BABALITY: F, B, B, HP
ANIMALITY: (Sweep) BLK, BLK, R, R, BLK
BRUTALITY: HP, HP, BLK, LK, HK, BLK, LK, HK, BLK, HP, LP
PIT: F, D, F, LP



RAIDEN

FATALITY 1: (Close) Hold LK (3 seconds) tap LK + BLK
FATALITY 2: (Close) Hold HP (8 seconds) release LP
FRIENDSHIP: D, B, F, HK
BABALITY: D, D, U + HK together
ANIMALITY: (Half Screen Away) D, F, D, HK
BRUTALITY: HP, HP, LK, LK, LK, HK, LP, LP, LP, BLK, BLK
PIT: D, D, D, HP



SUB ZERO

FATALITY 1: (Close) D, D, D, F, HP
FATALITY 2: (Close) D, F, F, F, HP
FRIENDSHIP: D, B, B, F, LK
BABALITY: D, F, F, HK
ANIMALITY: B, B, F, D, LP
BRUTALITY: HP, LP, HP, BLK, LK, LK, HK, HK, LP, HP, LP
PIT: F, D, F, F, HP



STRYKER

FATALITY 1: (Close) D, F, D, F, BLK
FATALITY 2: (Full screen away) F, F, F, LK
FRIENDSHIP: LP, R, R, LP **BABALITY:** D, F, F, B, HP
ANIMALITY: (One step away) R, R, R, BLK
BRUTALITY: HP, LP, HK, LK, HP, LP, LK, HK, HP, LK, LK
PIT: F, U, U, HK



CLASSIC RAIDEN

FATALITY 1: (Half screen) F, B, B, B, HP
FRIENDSHIP: N/A
BABALITY: N/A
ANIMALITY: N/A
BRUTALITY: HP, HP, HP, HP, BLK, HK, HK, LP, HP, HP, HP
PIT: D, D, F, HK



CLASSIC SUB ZERO

FATALITY 1: (Close) Hold BLK, tap B, B, B, HP, release BLK
FATALITY 2: (Close) B, F, D, F, LP
FRIENDSHIP: D, F, HK **BABALITY:** F, F, F, HK
ANIMALITY: (Sweep) Hold HP, tap F, B, D, F, release HP
BRUTALITY: HP, HP, HP, LP, LP, BLK, HK, HK, LK, LK, BLK
PIT: LK, R, R, R, R



REPTILE

FATALITY 1: (Half Screen Away) B, F, D, BLK
FATALITY 2: (One Step Away) F, F, U, U, HK
FRIENDSHIP: (Close) D, F, F, B, HK
BABALITY: F, F, B, D, LK
ANIMALITY: (Close) D, D, D, U, HK
BRUTALITY: HP, BLK, HK, HK, BLK, HP, LP, LK, LK, BLK, LP
PIT: BLK, R, BLK, BLK



SCORPION

FATALITY 1: (Full Screen Away) D, D, U, HK
FATALITY 2: (Half screen) F, F, B, LP
FRIENDSHIP: (Close) B, F, F, B, LK
BABALITY: D, B, B, F, HP
ANIMALITY: (Close) F, U, U, HK
BRUTALITY: HP, HP, BLK, HK, HK, LK, HK, HP, HP, LP, HP
PIT: F, U, U, LP



SEKTOR

FATALITY 1: (Half screen away) F, F, F, B, BLK
FATALITY 2: (Sweep) LP, R, R, BLK
FRIENDSHIP: (Half screen) R, R, R, R, D
BABALITY: B, D, D, D, HK
ANIMALITY: (Close) F, F, D, U
BRUTALITY: HP, HP, BLK, BLK, HK, HK, LK, LK, LP, LP, HP
PIT: R, R, R, D



SHANG TSUNG

FATALITY 1: (Close) Hold LP, tap D, F, F, D, release LP
FATALITY 2: (Close) Hold LP, tap R, BLK, R, BLK, release LP
FRIENDSHIP: LK, R, R, D
BABALITY: R, R, R, LK
ANIMALITY: (Sweep) Hold HP, tap R, R, R, release HP
BRUTALITY: HP, BLK, BLK, BLK, LK, HP, LP, LP, BLK, BLK, BLK
PIT: U, U, B, LP



SHEEVA

FATALITY 1: (Close) Hold HP, tap D, F, F, release HP
FATALITY 2: (Close) F, D, D, F + LP together
FRIENDSHIP: F, F, D, F, HP
BABALITY: D, D, D, B, HK
ANIMALITY: (Close) R, BLK, BLK, BLK, BLK
BRUTALITY: HP, LP, BLK, LK, HK, BLK, HK, LK, BLK, LP, HP
PIT: D, F, D, F, LP



SINDEL

FATALITY 1: (One step away) R, R, BLK, R, BLK
FATALITY 2: (Close) R, BLK, BLK, R + BLK together
FRIENDSHIP: R, R, R, R, R, U
BABALITY: R, R, R, U
ANIMALITY: (Close) F, F, U, HP
BRUTALITY: HP, BLK, LK, BLK, LK, HK, BLK, HK, LK, BLK, LP
PIT: D, D, D, LP



SONYA

FATALITY 1: (Anywhere) B, F, D, D, R
FATALITY 2: (Full screen away) Hold BLK + R, tap U, U, B, D
FRIENDSHIP: B, F, B, D, R **BABALITY:** D, D, F, LK
ANIMALITY: (Close) Hold LP, tap B, F, D, F, release LP
BRUTALITY: HP, LK, BLK, HP, LK, BLK, HP, LP, BLK, HK, LK
PIT: F, F, D, HP



SMOKE

FATALITY 1: (Full Screen Away) U, U, F, D
FATALITY 2: (Sweep) Hold BLK + R, tap D, D, F, U
FRIENDSHIP: (Outside sweep) R, R, R, HK
BABALITY: D, D, B, B, HK **ANIMALITY:** (Far Away) D, F, F, BLK
BRUTALITY: HP, LK, LK, HK, BLK, BLK, LP, LP, HP, HP, BLK
PIT: F, F, D, LK



HUMAN SMOKE

FATALITY 1: (Full Screen Away) U, U, F, D
FATALITY 2: (Sweep) Hold BLK + R, tap D, D, F, U
FRIENDSHIP: (Outside sweep) R, R, R, HK
BABALITY: D, D, B, B, HK **ANIMALITY:** D, F, F, BLK
BRUTALITY: HP, LK, LK, HK, BLK, BLK, LP, LP, HP, HP, BLK
PIT: F, F, D, LK

QUAKE
Secrets Out PART 3

Greetings fellow adventurers! This issue, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE's Quake tips coverage continues apace with a mammoth breakdown of the second and third Episodes - that's right - EVERY secret is revealed before your very eyes! Next issue we round the whole thing off with the final Episode, but this lot should keep you occupied until then!

E2M1: THE INSTALLATION

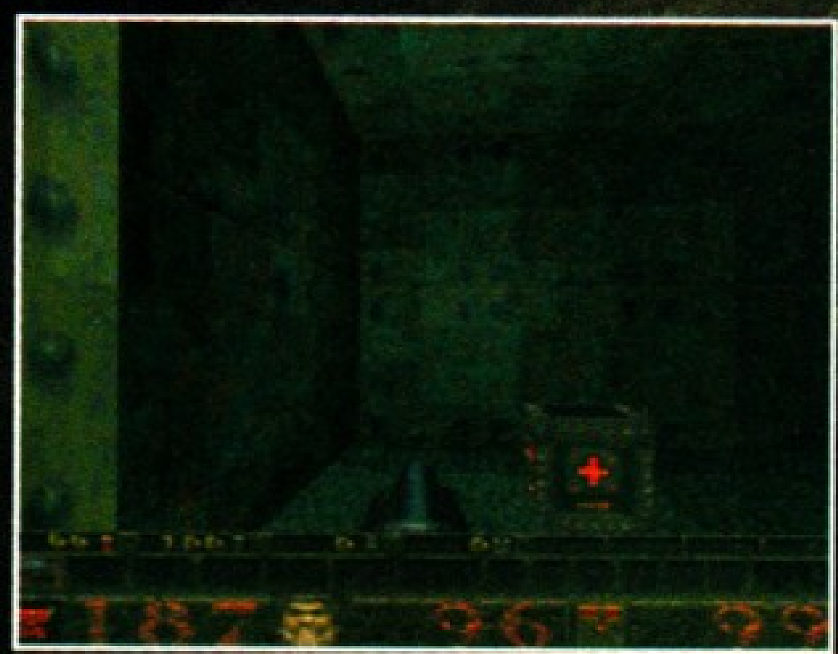
Secret One: From the start, leave the hall and enter the large room with the dog and the enforcer. Jump off the bridge to the left. Underneath the structure is a small tunnel leading up to a Red Armour power-up!



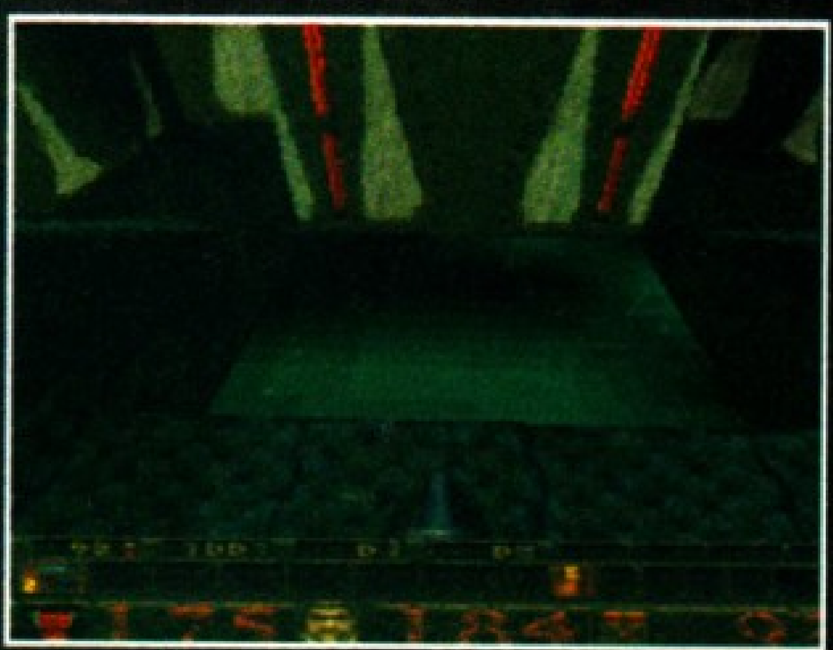


Secret Two: In the room with the Gold Key, there are two sets of bars coming out from adjacent walls. One set of bars is actually just two platforms. Jump onto the lower one, then onto the upper one. Shoot the wall to reveal a 100 Health power-up!





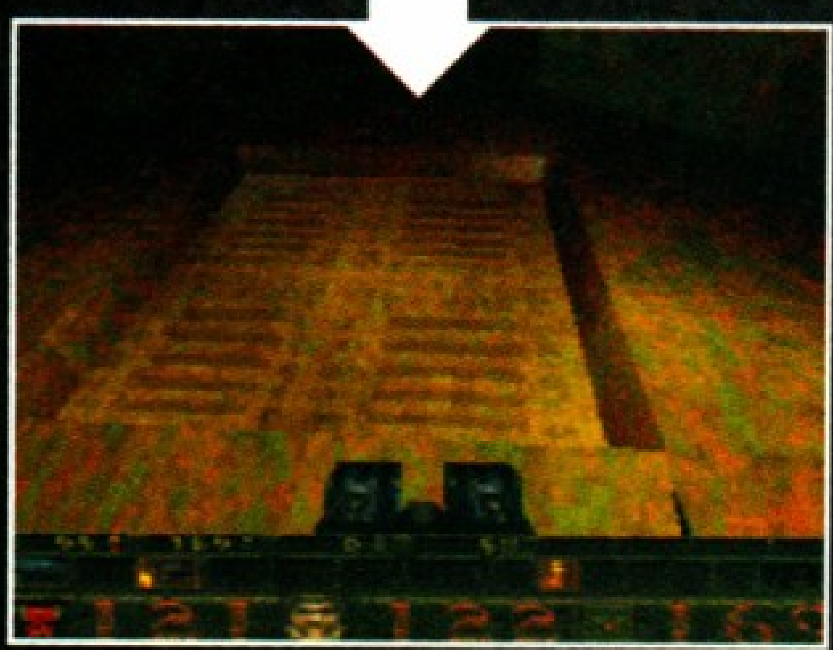
Secret Three: In the same room as Secret Three jump into the water directly underneath the enforcer's alcove. Swim through either tunnel to reach a hidden room with tons of health and ammo. Plus a Slipgate to get out!





Secret Four: After the Gold Key Door has been opened you'll find a small water pool surrounded by a path. Jump in. At the bottom of the water is a grate. Shoot it to open a tunnel leading down. Follow it to the end to get a grenade launcher and some health.





(Above) Some secrets are easy to find - others require some cunning and sharp-shooting!

Secret Five: The same tunnel revealed by shooting the grate in Secret Four has another secret. After shooting the grate and swimming down you'll find another grate directly behind you, adjacent to the Bio-Suit in front of you. Shoot this wall THREE times then follow the tunnel to the Secret Four room. Now you'll find another room has opened up with a Pentagram of Protection in it!





(Left) The secrets are important, often revealing power-ups that make the level a lot easier.

Secret Six: Nearing the end of the stage you'll find a tall structure made of criss-crossing bars, plus a lift that goes up. Ride the lift up, then drop down so it's in front of you. As it descends, jump forward into the alcove behind it. Now shoot the wall to the left to reveal a Quad Damage.

Secret Seven: Ride the lift mentioned in Secret Six to the top then turn around. You should now be able to jump into the criss-cross structure on the left. Inside is a Yellow Armour. Collect it to activate the secret... as you would imagine, this crops up at a really convenient part of the level!






E2M2: THE OGRE CITADEL

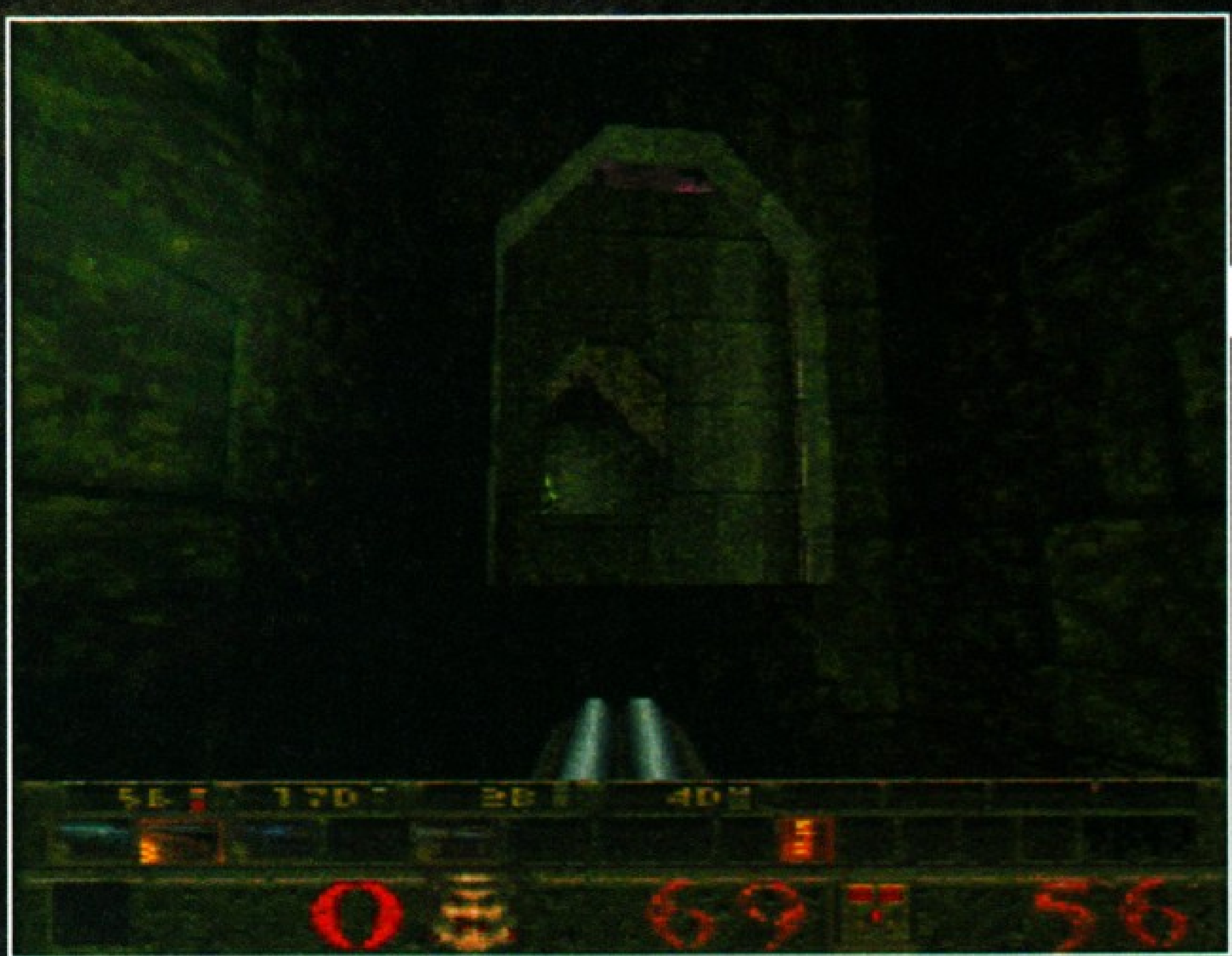
Secret One: Follow the stairs at the front until you reach the moat. Jump down into the moat and go through the exit at the left. This leads you to a lift and a 100 Health power-up. Simple.




Secret Two: Continue down the path from Secret One until you reach the river with paths leading left and right. Follow the river left and you'll reach a grenade launcher. This area is a secret, oddly enough.




Secret Three: After you've taken out the Shambler and collected the Gold Key, blast the red symbol on the wall and exit the room. The first window on your left can be jumped through, and this leads to the raised path with the Yellow Armour on it.

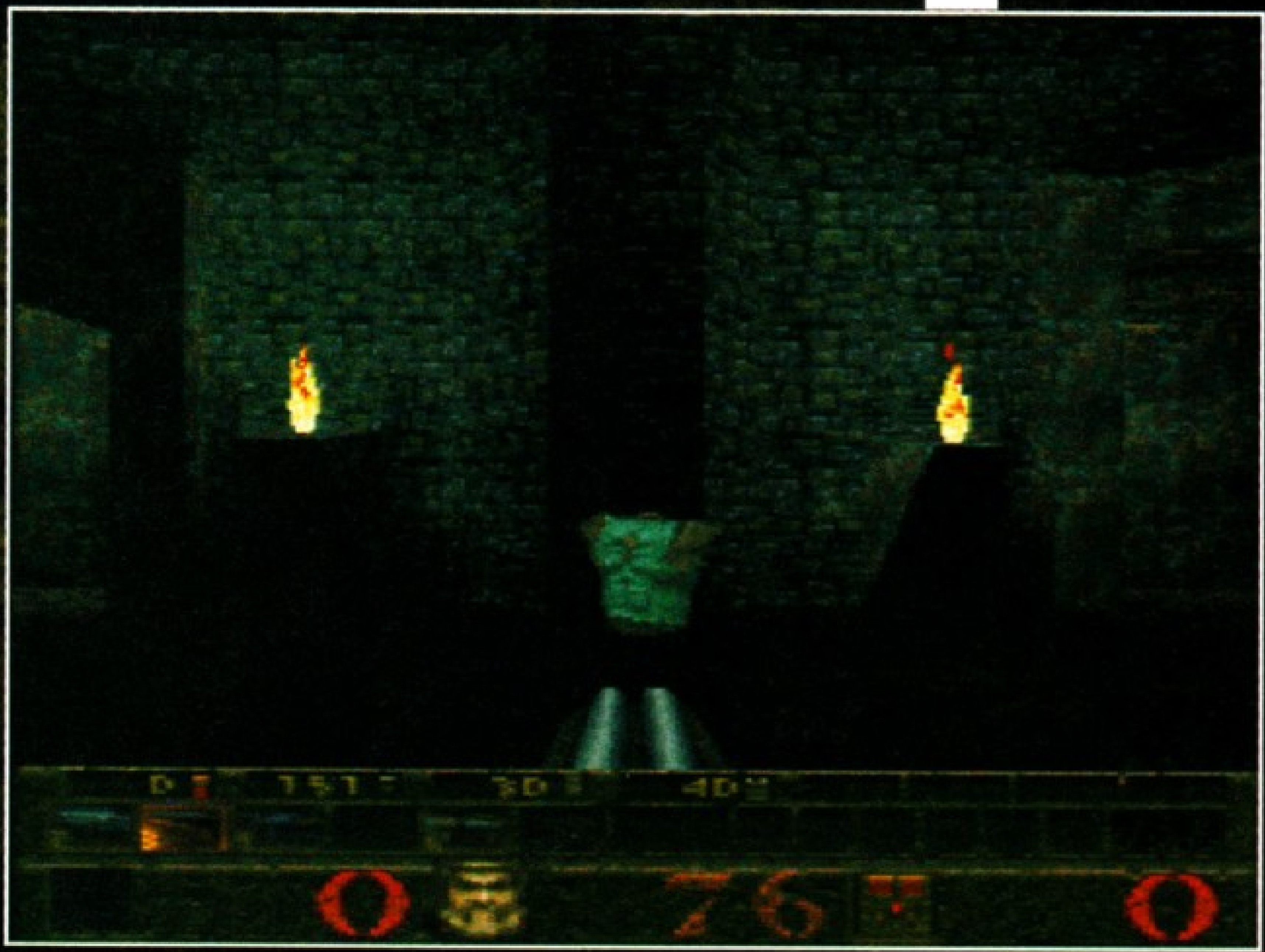



(Above) This secret is accessed just after you've endured a classic (but draining) confrontation with a Shambler – the toughest creature in Quake. That 100 Health and extra ammo sure makes a difference at this point...

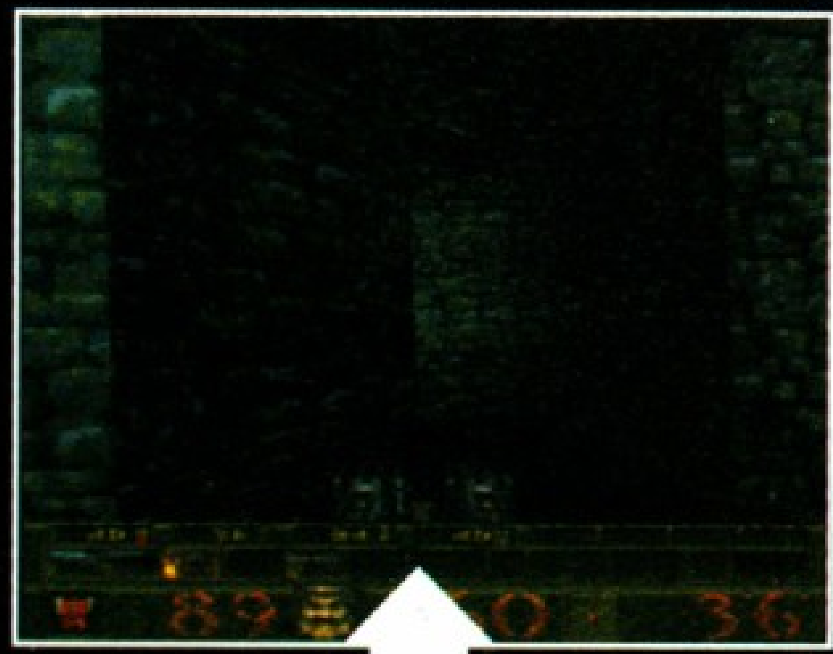
E2M3: THE CRYPT OF DECAY

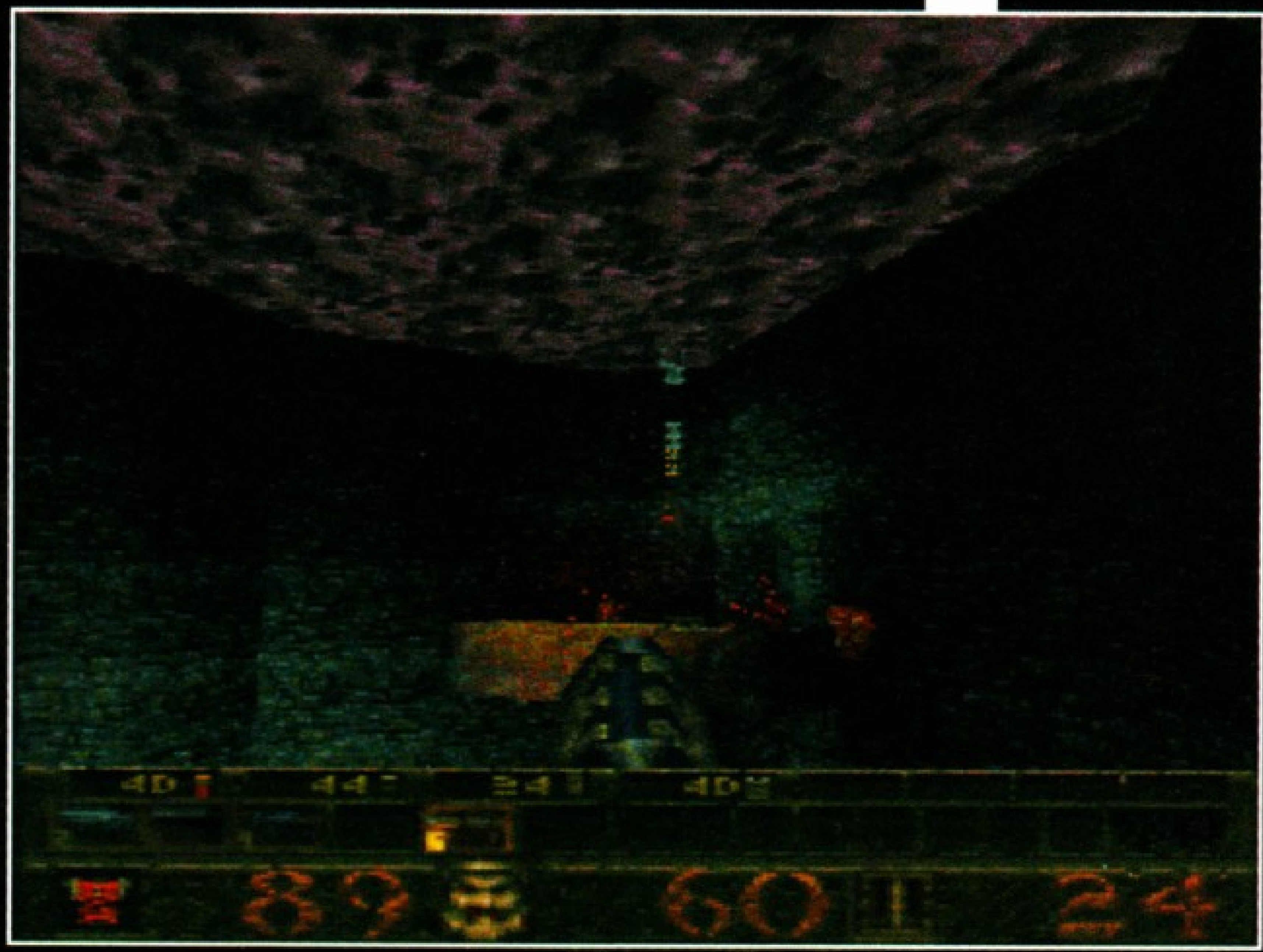
Secret One: Near the start of the level you'll find a bridge leading to some Green Armour. Jump into the water and go through the arch directly under the armour. Take a left through another arch, swim forward then take the passage to your right. This leads to a Red Armour and a Slipgate out of there.





Secret Two: At the path in front of the Gold Key Door, you'll see a raised platform behind you with two zombies on it. Chuck a grenade or two to take them out then shoot at the general area with a shotgun or nailgun. This opens up a small alcove next to the Gold Key Door, which leads you to the zombie platform. There are some rockets to collect.





Secret Three: When you pick up the Gold Key, three small chambers open up, two of which reveal Hell Knights. Destroy them then look into the chambers. One of them has a torch inside it. Shoot the back of this alcove to reveal some Yellow Armour, health and the path to the Secret Level. This is blocked until you have accomplished Secret Four, though. So take a look at that text to the right and prepare a return journey!





Secret Four: After negotiating the passage with nail-shooters in the wall you'll pass over some water, through a tower, and into the final section of the level. Go left at the junction (right takes you to the exit). There is a red Quake symbol in the ceiling. Shooting it reveals a secret door and gives you a step to reach it. Inside the room revealed is some health and a button for reaching the secret area. It's best to follow the secret below to get to the Secret Level.





BONUS SECRET! From Secret Four, retrace your steps to the bridge and tower. As you face the nail-shooting passage in front of you, you should see two ledges to the left and right. The left ledge has some rockets, the right a Quad Damage. Jump onto the right one. In addition to the Quad is a small ledge running along the wall. Follow it to the end and you should see hole in the wall you can jump to. Jump in, grab the goodies then leap into the Well of Wishes. Inside is a Pentagram, a Bio-Suit plus an odd homage on the wall. When you've got bored admiring it. go to the wall adjacent to where you came in. It will open, leading you to the pool of water in Secret Two. Now you'll find the exit to the Secret Level is open (provided you have accomplished Secret Four).





It's not really a secret – just a stupid bonus featuring a Lobotomy coder on the wall!

E2M4 - THE EBON FORTRESS

Secret One: When you surface from the water, you'll see an ogre raining grenades down on you plus a zombie on a small bit of land. In the corner, opposite the zombie is a hidden passage leading down to some armour, ammo and a Quad Damage!

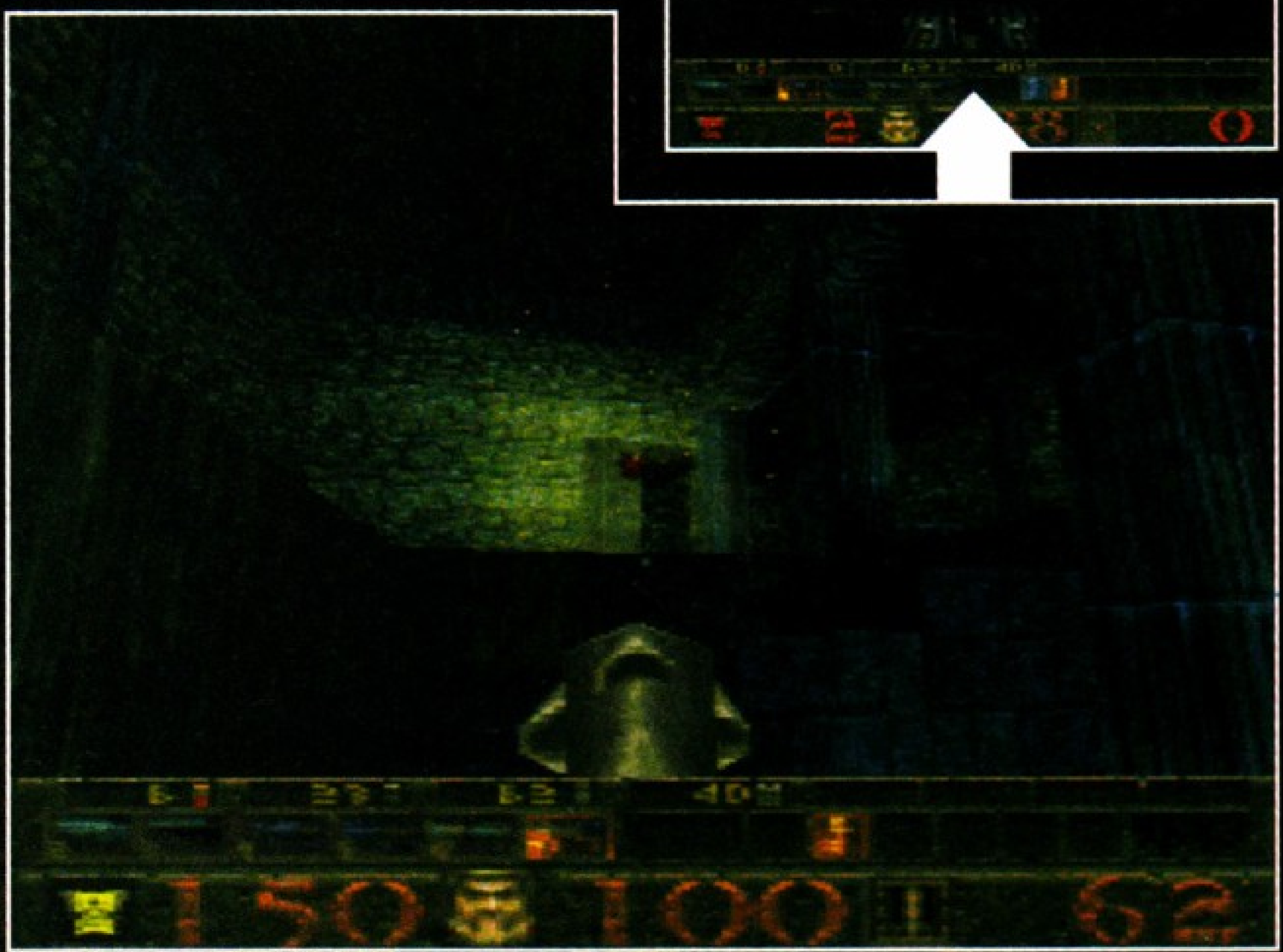


Secret Two: When you reach the outside of the fortress (looking down on the water described in Secret One), continue forward and turn left. Next to the stairs, behind you, is a secret room containing a 100 Health boost. Now that's not too shabby eh?



Secret Three: From Secret Two, go straight on to the staircase in front of you. Mid-way up the stairs check out the wall. The usual stone should give way at one point to a wooden false wall. Shoot it to reveal some cool gear.





Secret Four: When you find the Silver Key, you should notice a small river of slime inside the structure. Jump in, swim to the end then get out to discover some more useful Red Armour.

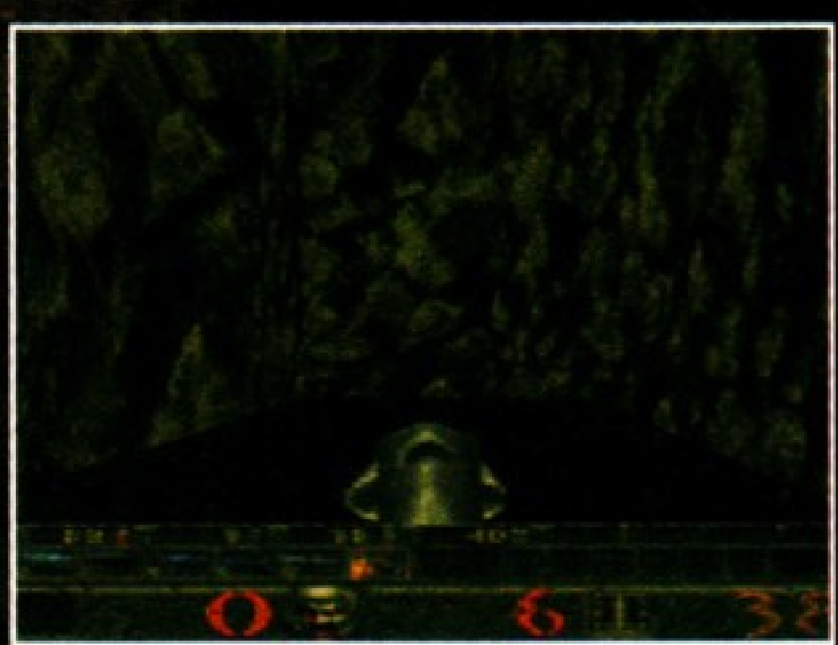




E2M5: THE WIZARD'S MANSE

Secret One: Right at the beginning you're walking along a bridge with a rock platform (and an ogre) to the left and above you. Jump into the water and follow the arrows. This leads to a lift and some ammo.





Secret Two: When you discover the Gold Key, collect it, then turn around and walk back down the passage. Keep your eyes on the wall to the right. You'll find one area of the wall is missing some of the trimming. Shoot it to reveal a Red Armour and a shaft leading down, taking you to a cunningly concealed Quad Damage!





E2M6: THE DISMAL OUIBLETTE

Secret One: Okay, you've crossed the L-shaped bridge, got through the locked door, jumped into the water in front of the fortress and taken out the zombies. You've been up into the tower and pressed the switch which lowers the bar blocking the passage just after you emerge from the zombie pool. Now you see a path which goes up, surrounding another pool of water. Jump in and behind you is a small alcove containing a Quad Damage power-up!





Secret Two: Right near the Gold Key Door is an elevator which leads to three different floors. When you ride it up for the first time you reach a path that leads in two directions. Ahead of you, progress is blocked by a bar. The path left leads to the switch required to lower the bar. BUT directly next to the barred exit is a false wall which can be shot, revealing a Pentagram of Protection and 100 Health! That's more than enough health and power-up capabilities to beat this stage!

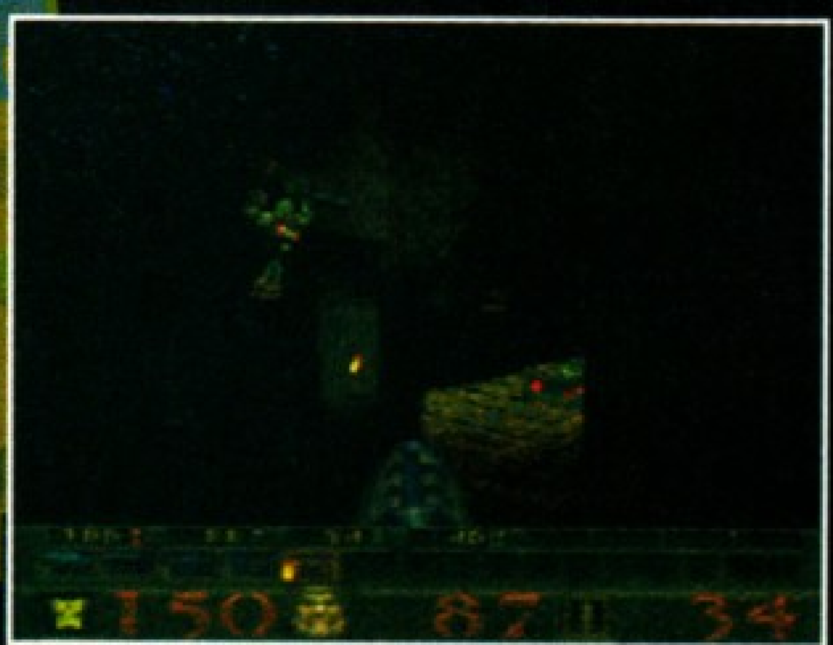




EPISODE TWO SECRET LEVEL: SECRET2

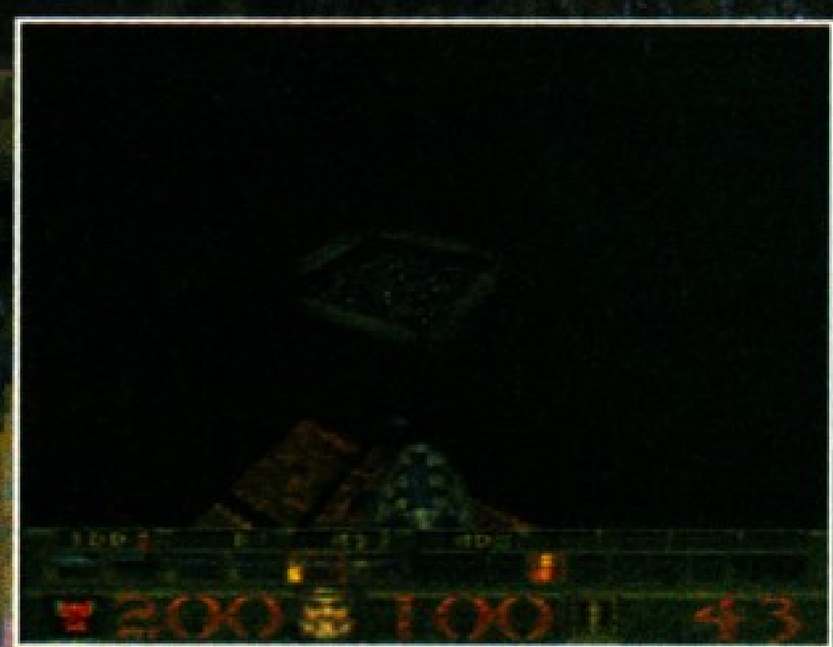
Secret One: The wooden ledge that sticks out with an ogre and a shotgun on it is the key to the first secret. Get onto the ledge, collect the shotgun and shoot the red Quake symbol. Jump down onto the ledge and turn to the left. A new room would have opened, containing a 100 Health power-up and some rockets - good stuff!

Secret Two: This level, dubbed the Ewok Village by SSM, has two incredibly fiendish secrets. Once you're through the Gold Key Door, drop down. There's two platforms suspended in the void, both with grenade-lobbing ogres on them. Kill them, then jump onto the platform which has the red Quake symbol behind it. There's a ledge on the right with some ammo on it. After collecting the ammo, you should see a Slipgate in the middle of nowhere. Jump onto it and pass through to find a Quad Damage.









E3M1: TERMINATION CENTRAL

Secret One: From the start of the stage, get on the lift and go down. From behind the metal barrier go through the hallway until the path splits into two. Go left down the path until you reach a bridge and a raised area on the floor. Just ahead to the right is a secret panel you can open to get a 200 Red Armour!

Secret Two: Walk on through the level until you reach the platform on the slime with a Quad Damage right in front of you. On the left of the platform are two sets of stairs drop down and look back at the tower to see a secret area under the platform with some rockets and a Yellow Armour!









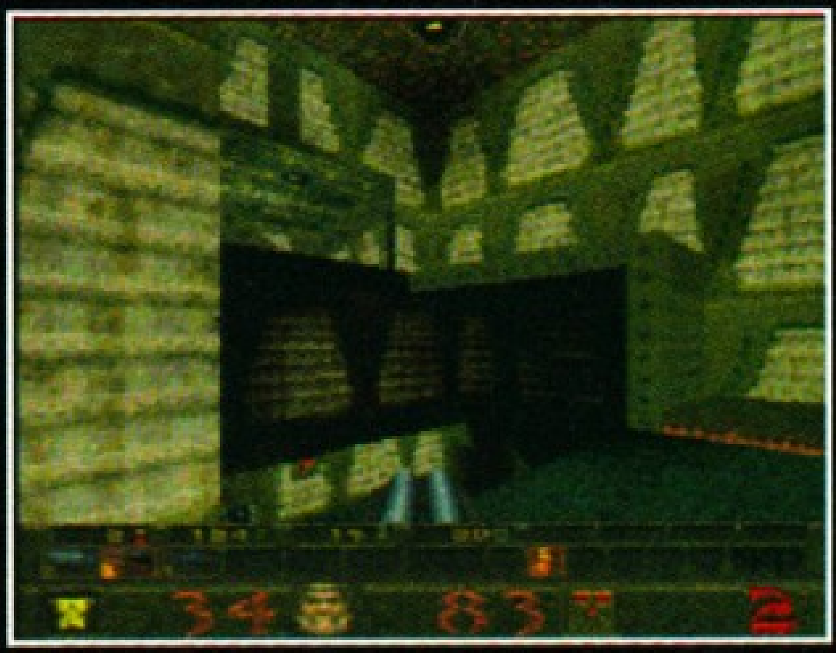
Secret Three: On the same platform on the slime, go to back of the tower, at the centre, and then leap downwards into the slime. There should be a tunnel right ahead of you, leading to a secret area with some useful ammo to get to grips with. This leads to a roof area with a 100 Health to locate before the Slipgate leads you back to the entrance of the level.

Secret Four: Go back to the platform with the Quad Damage. Go around the back and press the switch to lower the platforms on the left. Go down the left corridor until you reach a room with a lift in from of you and a dark area to the left. There's a platform in the dark you can walk on. Follow it to get another Quad Damage power-up!



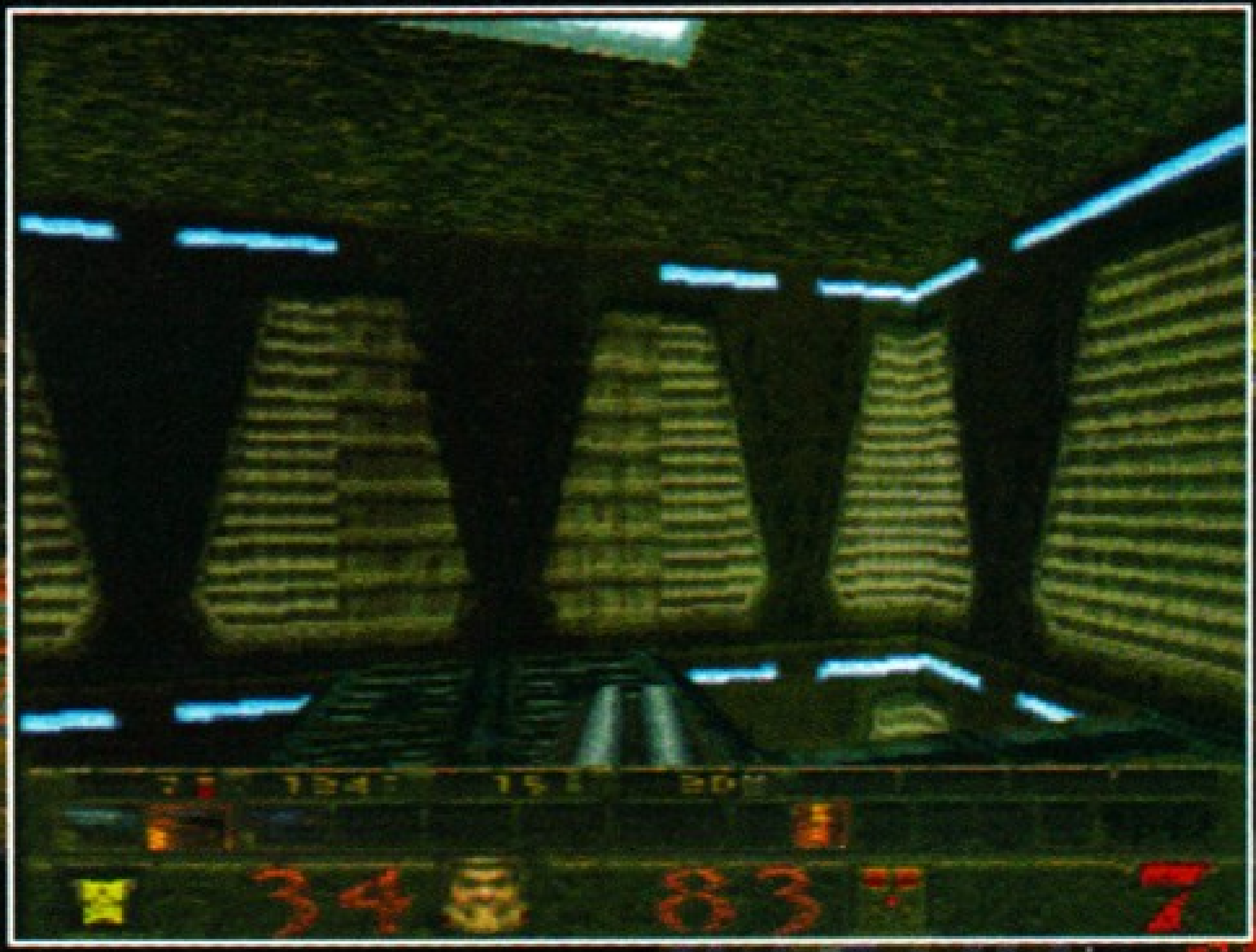






Secret Five: Take the lift described in the last secret and then go right. You'll find yourself in a metal structure with crates you can jump onto. Do so, all the way to the top of the structure. Once you're at the "summit", turn left and you'll see an area of wall with a texture that doesn't fit. Shoot it to reveal the last secret. A 100 Health is yours! Now you should have plenty of health (and a surfeit of Quad Damages) required to blast the hell out of the remaining meanies and make your way to the Slipgate. Marvellous!

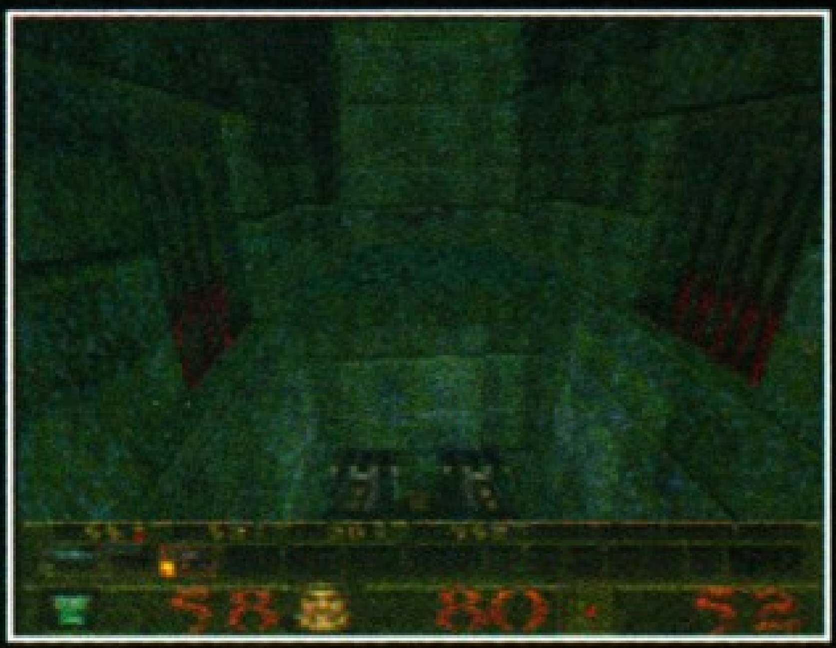


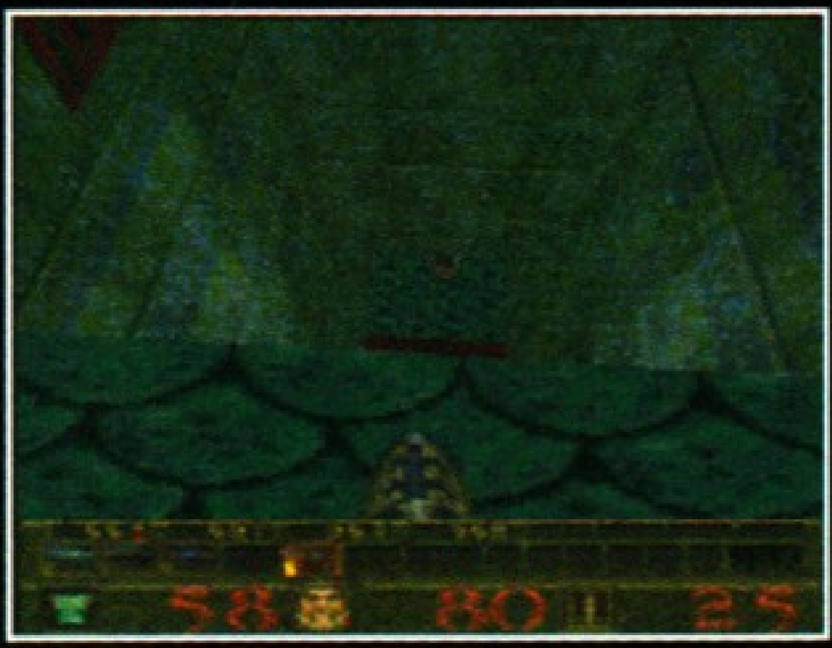


E3M2: THE VAULTS OF ZIN

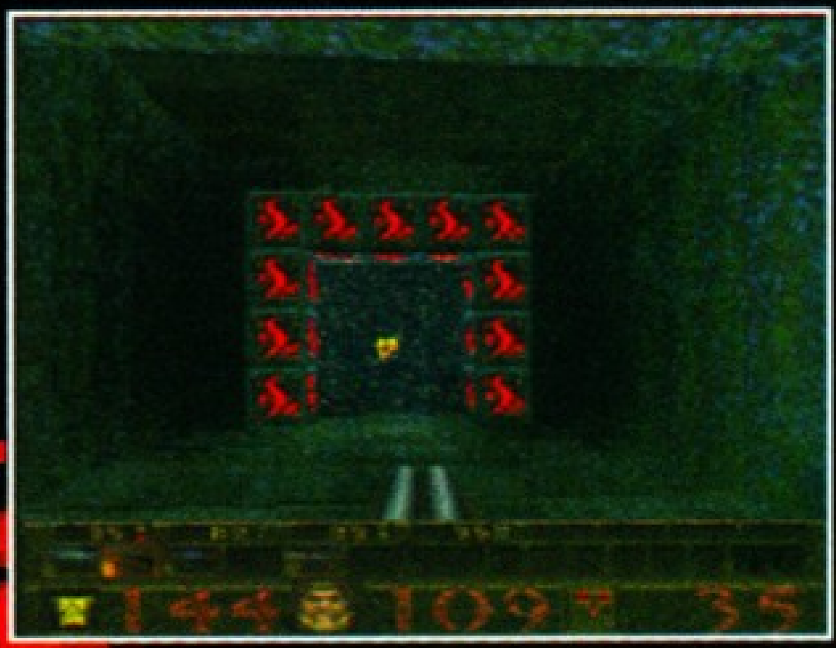
Secret One: From the beginning, go forwards, turn left, then go forward and turn right until you're facing a grenade launcher. Jump over and get it then turn around, lob a grenade down there and drop down into the lava. Quickly move forwards and collect the 100 Health.

Secret Two: In the room with ogres on the rafters above you there's a big wall with a pic of a man being crucified. Shoot the area on the bottom-right of the pic to reveal a hidden door. Go inside and scoop a cool Ring of Shadows (just in time for a double Demon attack just scant seconds later!)









Secret Three: In the same room, there's lift down which leads to an ogre confrontation. The aim here is to press a switch which opens up a new area in the room with the crucifiction pic. In the new area is a slightly off-pattern texture. Shoot it to reveal a warp to the rafters (and tons of health!)





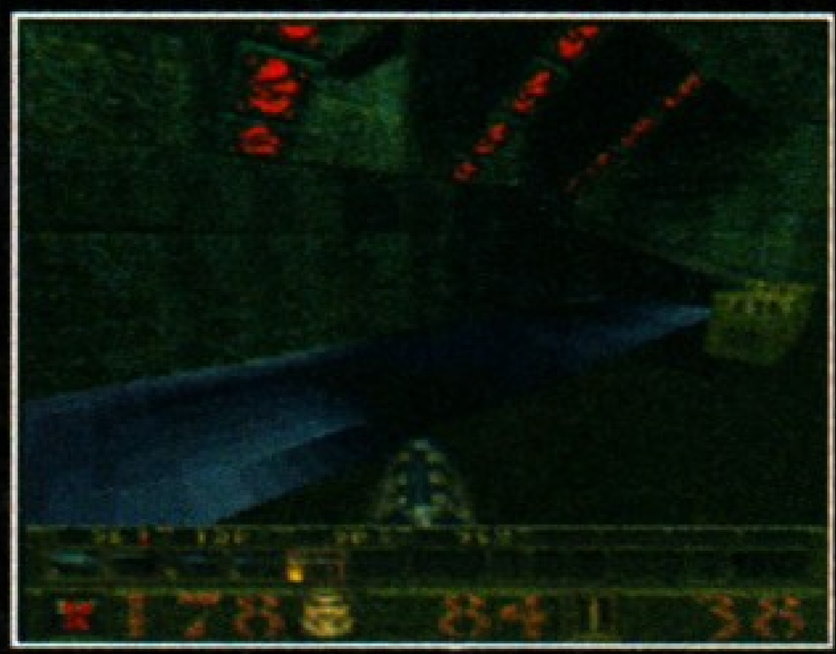


E3M3: THE TOMB OF TERROR

Secret One: Once you've figured out how to exit from the first room, take out the Hell Knight and walk to the top of the staircase which has risen out of the lava. Now turn right and look up. There's a red Quake switch to blast! Do so and look down - a Slipgate has appeared leading to a cool 200 Red Armour in the rafters above!

Secret Two: The second (and last) secret of this stage is so easy it's painful. After dropping down from getting the Red Armour, enter the room and pick up the Perforator. Now turn right where a Hell Knight attacks you. There's a pool of water at the far end of the room. Jump in, swim to the right and collect a 100 Health!



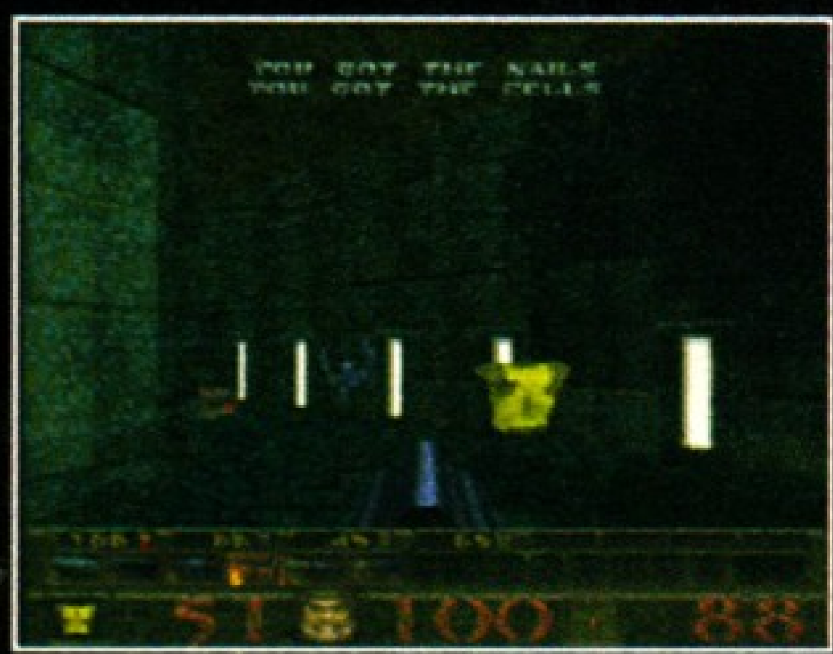



E3M4: SATAN'S DARK DELIGHT

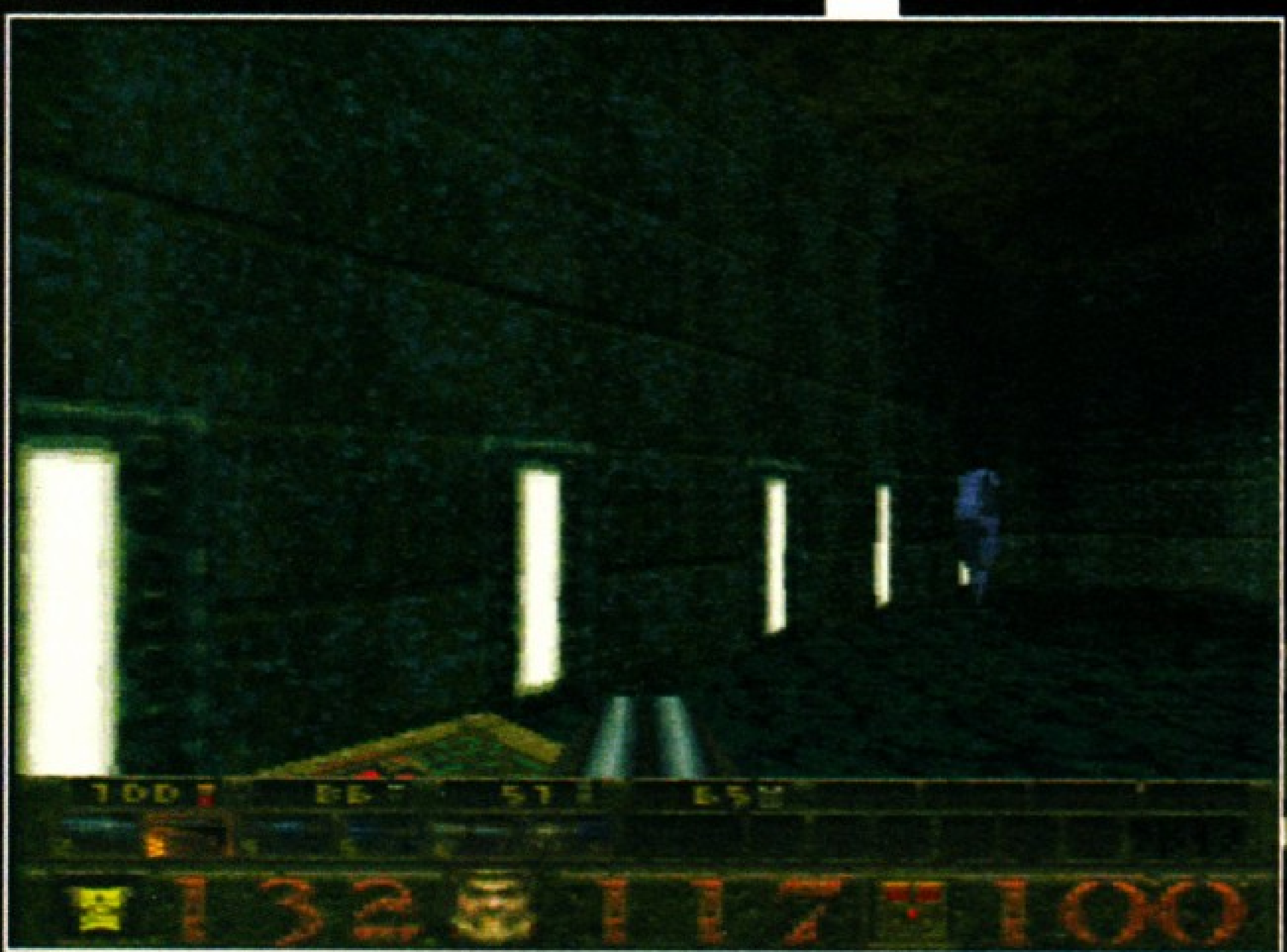
Secret One: After entering the room with the tower in the middle containing the rocket launcher, go through the far set of doors until you face an ogre on a platform, take him out and enter the room in front of you. Press the switch to open the door. Climb the ramp then turn around 180 degrees. On the left is a small ramp leading to the secret area! Health aplenty!

Secret Two: Drop down into the big area with the floating platform that guides you around. Don't shoot the first button you past but keep your eyes peeled for a button in the distance. You should now move right - and there should be a platform (and an ogre) beneath you. Look in the corner for a secret containing Yellow Armour, Quad Damage and plenty more besides!



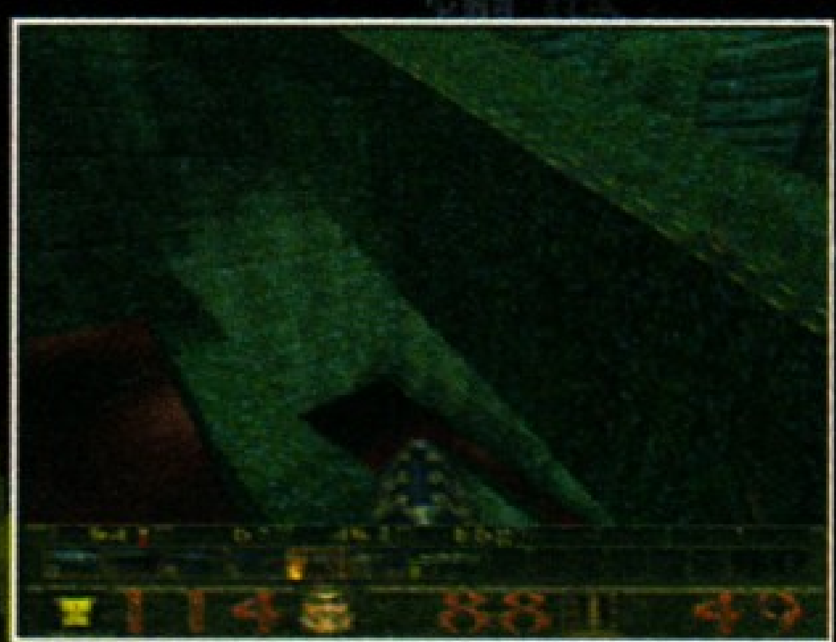
Secret Three: In the same room as Secret Two, you'll see white lights on the wall behind the Quad Damage. Shoot all of them (there should be a text message or two as you blast hell out of those lights) to reveal a Pentagram of Protection! This should sort you out for the remainder of this section of the level.

Secret Four: Once you've beaten the big open area mentioned above, you end up taking a lift up to the end of the level. In the room directly outside the lift shaft there are several lights on the roof. Shooting the yellow one reveals a Quad Damage right in front of your very eyes! Useful for taking out the Shambler ahead.




Secret Level Warp: Use the aforementioned Quad Damage to kill the Shambler. Collect the health and the Lightning Gun. Now, directly UNDER the staircase you came down is a tunnel in the lava leading to the secret level! This particular secret level has no secrets, thank the Lord.




(Above) We've done the Secret Levels before, but for the sake of completion...

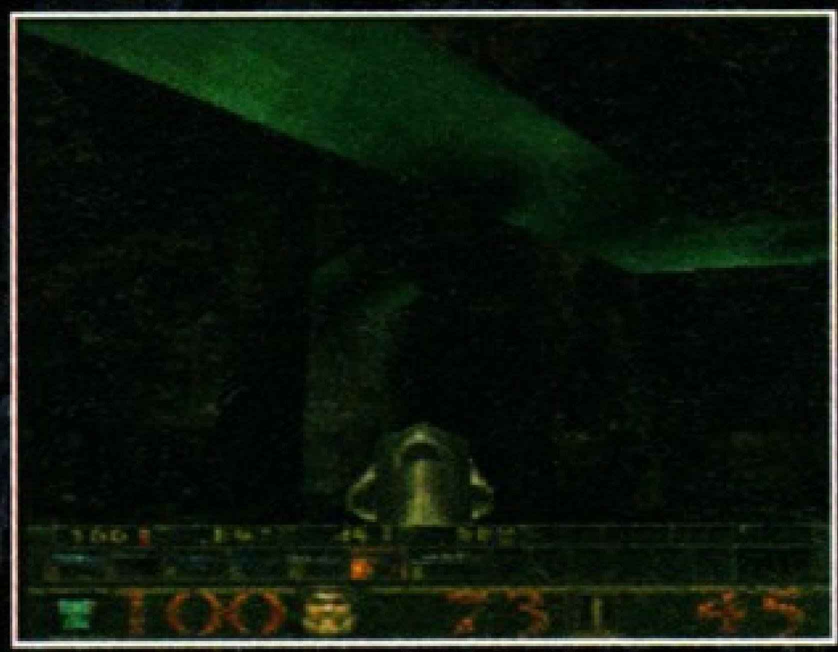
E3M5: WIND TUNNELS

Secret One: In the first room with the three wind tunnels, jump up the first and land in the main room. Now leave using the corridor and take two corners. Check the corner of the room - there's a drop down leading to the Quad Damage in the room you just left.





Secret Two: When you return to the main chamber, take the second wind tunnel, walk down the ramp and don't use the next tunnel. Instead jump into the water - there's an adjoining tunnel underneath leading to a rocket launcher, some health and ammo.



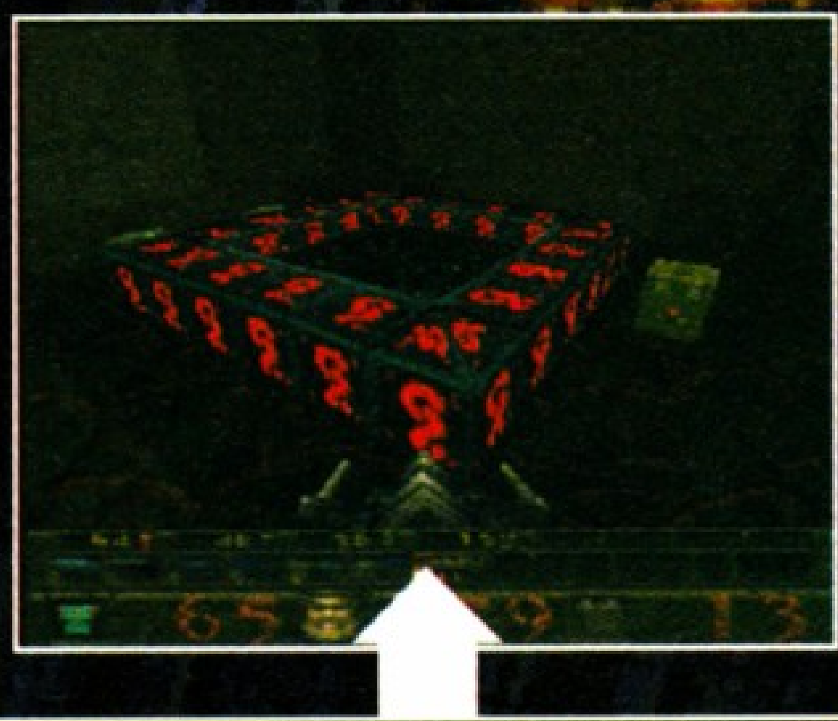


Secret Three: After running the gauntlet of spike-shooters, materialising meanies and a Shambler (tip: save the Quad!), you find yourself looking over a huge pit. Walk to the far end of the pit and turn around. In the distance you'll see a red Quake symbol. Shoot it to reveal a hidden cache with some goodies.





Secret Four: After taking the last wind tunnel (the third one to open in the first main room) you find yourself facing the exit. Before you go through it, notice the stupidly obvious false floor. Shoot it and go down, collect the goodies and wait for the floor to rise again. Now go through the Slipgate!



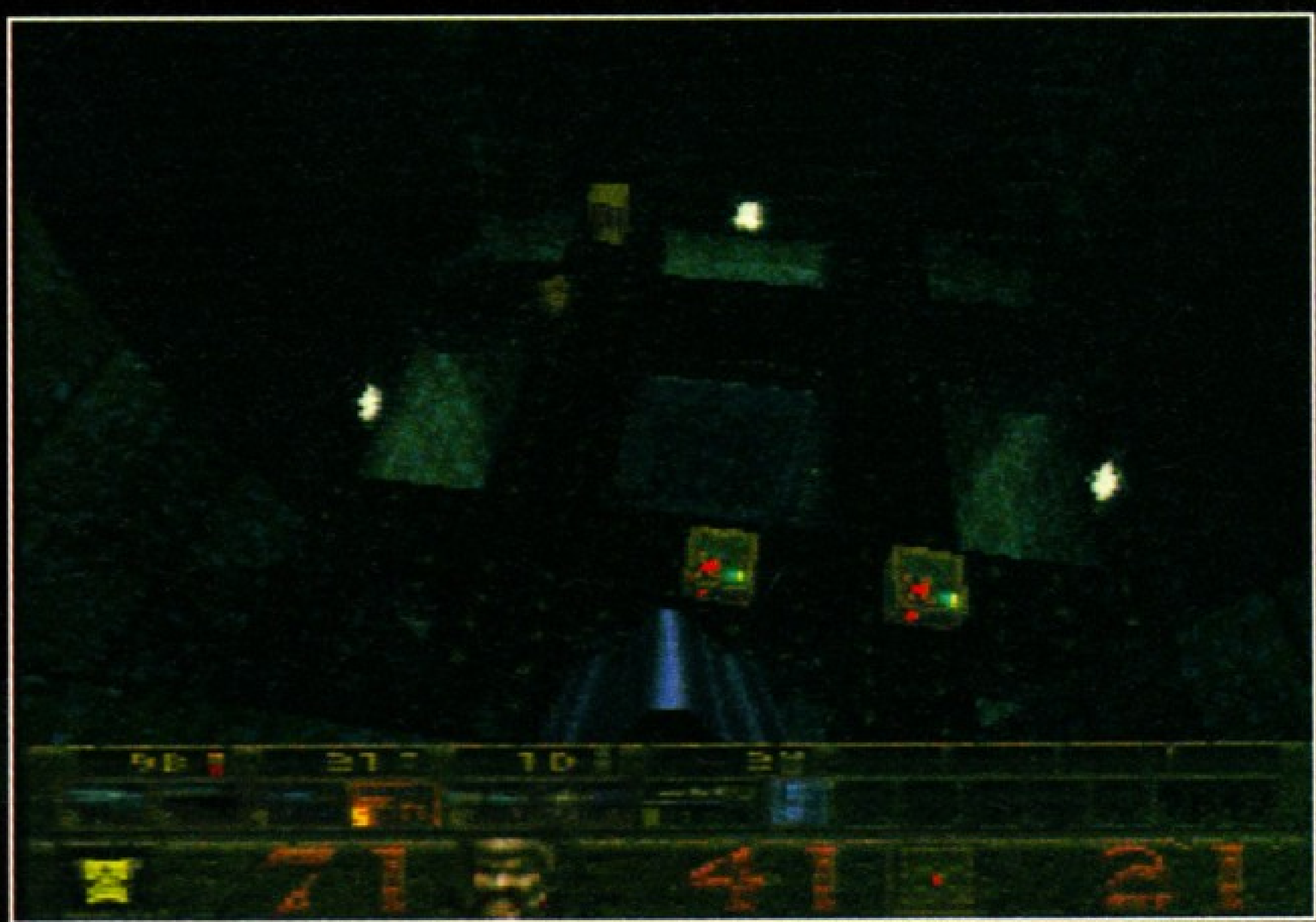


E3M6: CHAMBERS OF TORMENT

Secret One: Go to the room with the silver key in it. Take a look at the ceiling and shoot the red Quake button. One of the walls drops down allowing you access to a passage with some Yellow Armour, health and a Quad Damage! Coolio!



Secret Two: Take the passage on the left when you enter the room with the gold key door. There's a lift at the end - look up and you'll see a familiar red Quake symbol ripe for the shooting. This opens up the way to the rafters on top of the passages with a nice selection of ammo and health for your consumption.



COIN-OPERATED

Next month is certainly a hot one for arcade fans. The AOU Show takes place in Tokyo this February and every major coin-op developer will be there to showcase forthcoming titles. We're taking a preview peek this month at some of the amazing games due to appear at the show and SSM will bring you the full, fact-packed lowdown next issue!

BY	CAPCOM
BOARD	CP-SYSTEM II
TYPE	2D BEAT 'EM UP
COMPLETE	100%

Do Capcom produce anything other than cracking 2D beat 'em ups? Not recently, but when their current coin-op line-up includes the superlative Marvel vs Capcom, who cares! Yep, it's not a hoax, a joke or C&VG's attempt at "primitive humour." Marvel vs Capcom is in fact a reality and a damn fine one at that. Still milking their proven CP-System II arcade board for all it's worth, Capcom have created what would appear to be the ultimate meeting of fighting forces. Taking established Street Fighter and Marvel characters, and throwing in a few of their own familiar faces, Capcom have pushed their tag team formula to dizzying new heights.

Marvel vs Capcom offers players a selection of 15 core characters, with the comic book team boasting Spiderman, Captain America, Hulk, Gambit, Wolverine and newcomers War Machine and Venom. Capcom's side are certainly no slouches as their ranks include Captain Commando, Strider, Megaman, Jin (from CyberBots), DarkStalkers' Morrigan, Ryu, Chun Li and Zangief. As in both X-Men vs Street Fighter and MSH vs Street Fighter, players select any two characters to take into battle, with the handy ability to switch between fighters by pressing HP and HK at any time. Your teammate then leaps into the fray to save your ass and give your opponent a good kicking. As well as standard special and super moves, characters are also capable of teaming up for combined specials, all of which cause spectacular damage when activated!



While the gameplay is certainly familiar, Capcom have obviously listened to fan requests for more than another X-Men vs Street Fighter update (MSH vs SF featured the same backgrounds and sprites). Instead, they've built the game from the ground up, with stunning new backdrops, jaw-dropping character animation and some of the most amazing visuals ever squeezed out of the CP-System II hardware. For starters, each character has their own specific background with Jin's futuristic cityscape littered with damaged CyberBots, Spiderman's detailed New York rooftop and Venom's symbiote-infested planetoid. The characters themselves are sure to delight and annoy fans (why include War Machine instead of Iron Man?) but the inclusion of such classic heroes as Megaman, Strider and Captain Commando ensure that Marvel vs Capcom is set to be an awesome arcade title.





Check out the selection screen... that's a total of 35 characters!





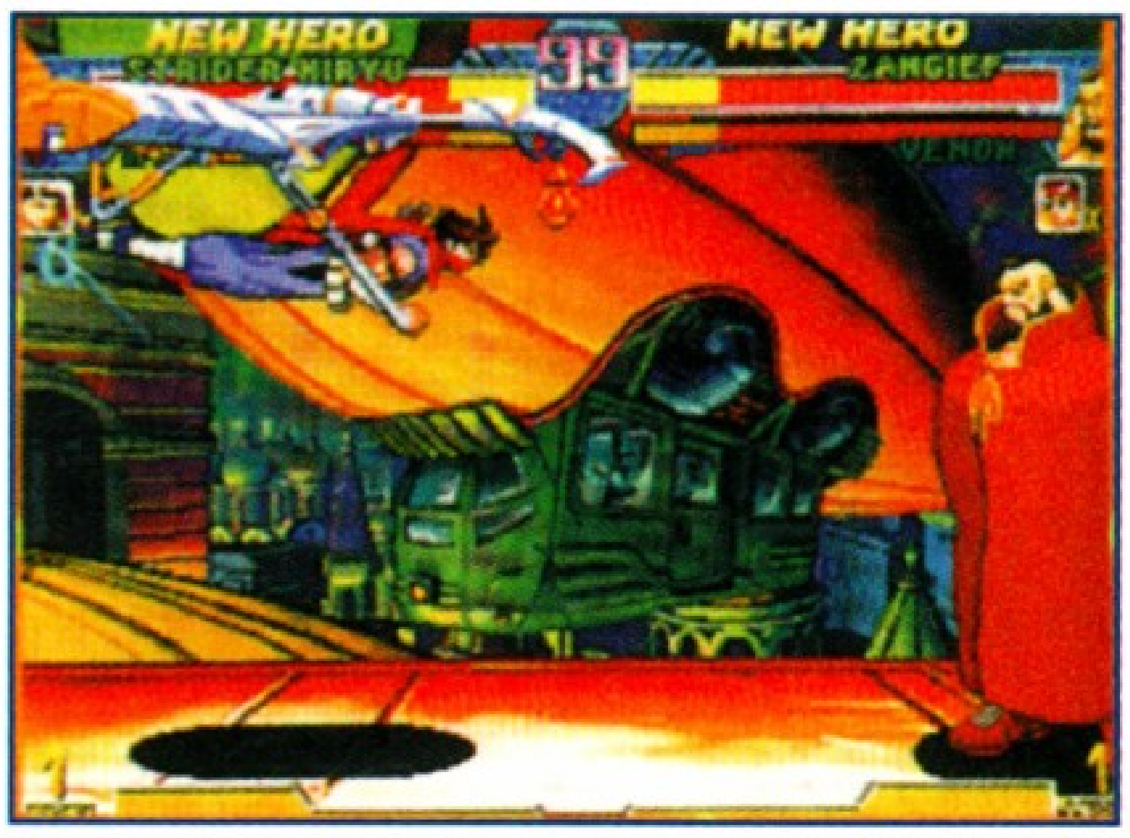
However, what's really gonna float your boat are the addition of Special Partners. As if having two characters on your team wasn't impressive enough, Capcom have also included a further 20 fighters to boost your roster. This feature allows play-



Taunts are still available and comic fans will pick up on clever touches such as Eddie Brock's symbiote reference. Go get 'em, Spidey!







Fan favourite Strider glides in to tackle Street Fighter's Zangief.





Strider calls upon the help of his gorgeous teammate, Eastwind.



Zangief pulls off his Ultra Final Atomic Buster on poor Jin. Ouch!



Megaman: Hulkbuster! Capcom's blue hero dons super armour.

ers to call upon the help of yet another character when the going gets tough. The chosen combatant appears and unleashes their own trademark attack which acts in a similar manner to MSH vs SF's Variable Assists. Players are only capable of using their Special Partners a few times during each fight, but this impressive feature gives Capcom the excuse to include even more characters in the game than any 2D fighter ever! So far we've discovered the following familiar faces: Iceman, Colossus, Storm, Jubilee, Magneto, Juggernaut, Cyclops, Psylocke, USAgent, Arthur (from Ghouls and Ghosts!), Rogue, Thor, Sakura, Eastwind (female fighter from Strider) Felicia, Anita and Ibuki. In addition to this



graphical onslaught, Capcom have packed even more characters in by having additional fighters appear when fighters perform certain specials. For instance, when Captain Commando activates his Command Strike, his Ninja and Baby Commando partners dash on to dish out the punishment. Amazing indeed and Capcom are promising even more surprises when Marvel Vs Capcom debuts at the AOU Show next month. We'll bring you a full update (and maybe even a moves list if you're lucky) in the next issue of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE!

KEN YOU DIG IT?

Unusually, for a Street Fighter connected game, Marvel vs Capcom appears to lack that one vital ingredient: Ken Masters. Old red pyjamas has appeared in every Street Fighter outing to date, offering players an alternative to Ryu's clean cut fighting style. While Ken isn't available as a main character or Special Partner, he does appear as part of Ryu's Super and his presence is also felt in the mysterious "Ken Mode." It's not yet known how this particular feature is activated, but when triggered Ryu takes on some of Ken's own abilities such as the Flaming Dragon Punch and more powerful Hurricane Kick. You may also be interested to learn about something called a "Gouki Mode" but more on that next month...





LET THE ONSLAUGHT BEGIN!

While Apocalypse was certainly an impressive boss for X-Men vs SF and MSH vs SF players to battle, Marvel vs Capcom takes final foes to new heights. We've yet to see this bad boy in action, but our sources confirm that Onslaught is the final challenge awaiting talented fighters. Just in case you're unaware, Onslaught recently appeared in the Marvel universe and was revealed to be an amalgamation of both Professor X and Magneto's dark sides. He was finally beaten by Earth's mightiest heroes, but in the ensuing chaos the Fantastic Four, Avengers, Iron Man, Captain America and even Dr Doom were apparently killed. Of course you can't keep a good (or bad) guy down and the heroes were soon revealed to have been living in a pocket dimension for the last year. So will Onslaught be a towering Apocalypse-style villain or a playable Juggernaut-size menace? We have no idea, but expect the first screenshots next issue!



FIGHTING VIPERS 2

BY	AM2
BOARD	MODEL 3
TYPE	3D BEAT 'EM UP
COMPLETE	60%



Retro combat in AM2's awesome Fighting Vipers 2. Players can expect more armour-smashing action in Armstone City.

We already know that Sega have some big name arcade sequels lined up for '98, but who would have expected one of those games to be Fighting Vipers 2! Yep, AM2 have taken their original armour-smashing hit to the next level with a Model 3 beat 'em up that's set to be every bit as amazing as the original coin-op.

However, while Fighting Vipers was based on moves and gameplay from Virtua Fighter 2, Vipers 2 has been totally created from scratch. All the characters are much richer in terms of design and appeal and their new attacks and special abilities look set to easily surpass those seen in the first game. Using the power of the Model 3 board, AM2 have been able to add much more detail into the characters' armour and the surrounding levels. Players can expect incredible special effects as they smash off armour and throw opponents into the surrounding fences and there are even new Super KO moves to discover!



CITY OF JUSTICE

Besides adding new characters and gameplay mechanics, there will be many other dramatic features in the finished game. There are ideas and features that AM2 were unable to include in the original Fighting Vipers, but now they have the technology to achieve whatever they like. Fans needn't worry that their favourite fighting game has changed completely because AM2 will be keeping all the most popular elements from Fighting Vipers in the sequel!

Fighting Vipers 2 is set a few years after the events in the original game and B.M. has used his criminal connections to become mayor of Armstone City. To remove any opposition to his rule, he has the Vipers incarcerated in a floating prison located in the city's harbour and outlaws street fighting. However, the Vipers have every intention of stopping B.M. and break out of the prison to take their battle back to the streets!

One obvious change is the game's soundtrack. Instead of the techno groove of the first game, AM2 will be using rock guitar music instead. In addition, there will be changes to the CPU Versus mode as well. Depending upon your character and your performance, the characters you face and the stages you visit will be different every time you play. AM2 have also hinted that there may be other game modes in addition to the standard Two Player Mode and CPU Mode, although they're keeping quiet at the moment as to what those extras may be.

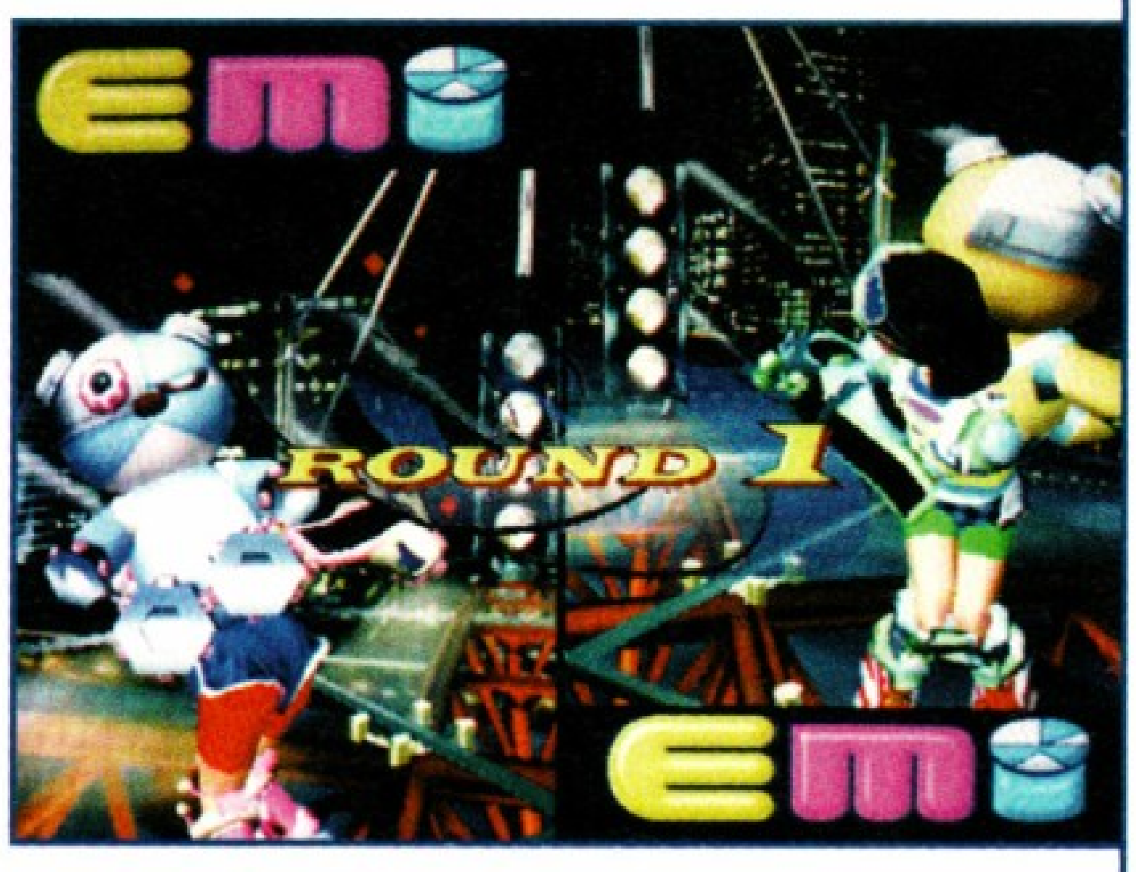


Characters revealed so far include newcomers Charlie and Emi as well as old-timers Mahler and Candy!









ALL-NEW CHARACTERS!

Joining the original cast of Fighting Vipers are two all new members:

EMI: She's a 12 year-old junior high school student. Due to family circumstances she was raised by her grandfather who ran a robot engineering school. One day her grandpa was kidnapped. Hacking into the city computer system she discovered that he had been taken to B.M's installation on the prison island. Strapping the "TEDDY MEC" that she had received from her grandfather onto her back, she becomes a Viper in order to rescue her lost relative.

CHARLIE: He's a 17 year-old student at the same senior high school as his rival Picky and was abandoned by his parents at an early age. Charlie was a lonely orphan until the sister of the church orphanage decided to look after him and raise him as her son. He's an expert at handling a BMX and when Picky became a Viper with his skateboard, it fuelled their rivalry even more. Charlie has now decided to become a viper as well!

VIRTUAL-ON ORATORIO TANGRAM

BY	AM3
BOARD	MODEL 3
TYPE	3D MECH FIGHTING
COMPLETE	60%




If Virtual On plays as great as it looks, AM3 will have a winner.



Development has progressed steadily on Virtual On Oratorio Tangram and AM3 are expected to unveil screenshots of the latest Virtuaroids shortly, as well the completed coin-op. Although there are no new details regarding the game itself, they have finally released information concerning the plot behind this latest mech fighting extravaganza. However, AM3 are saying that there are still more story details to be revealed so expect to see some new aspects develop over the following few months.

It seems that the future war glimpsed in the first Virtual On game is still being fought. Two rival companies, DNA and RNA, have been employing mechs with which to battle each other. To the winner go the nine mech production plants scattered throughout the galaxy plus control of the Moon Gate (an artificial defence satellite). However, the TANGRAM (Space Time Causation Control Mechanism) that controlled the Moon Gate has vanished from our reality and the satellite is out of control. Both companies may be battling to rule the galaxy, but if they don't stop the Moon Gate, there won't be much of the cosmos left! The finished version of Virtual On Oratorio Tangram will probably be ready in time for the AOU Show, but AM3 are cramming so many features into the game that its release may slip. We'll have more news next month.



The Model 3 board is performing some cool special effects.






All your favourite mechs are back for a spot of 'bot-bashing.

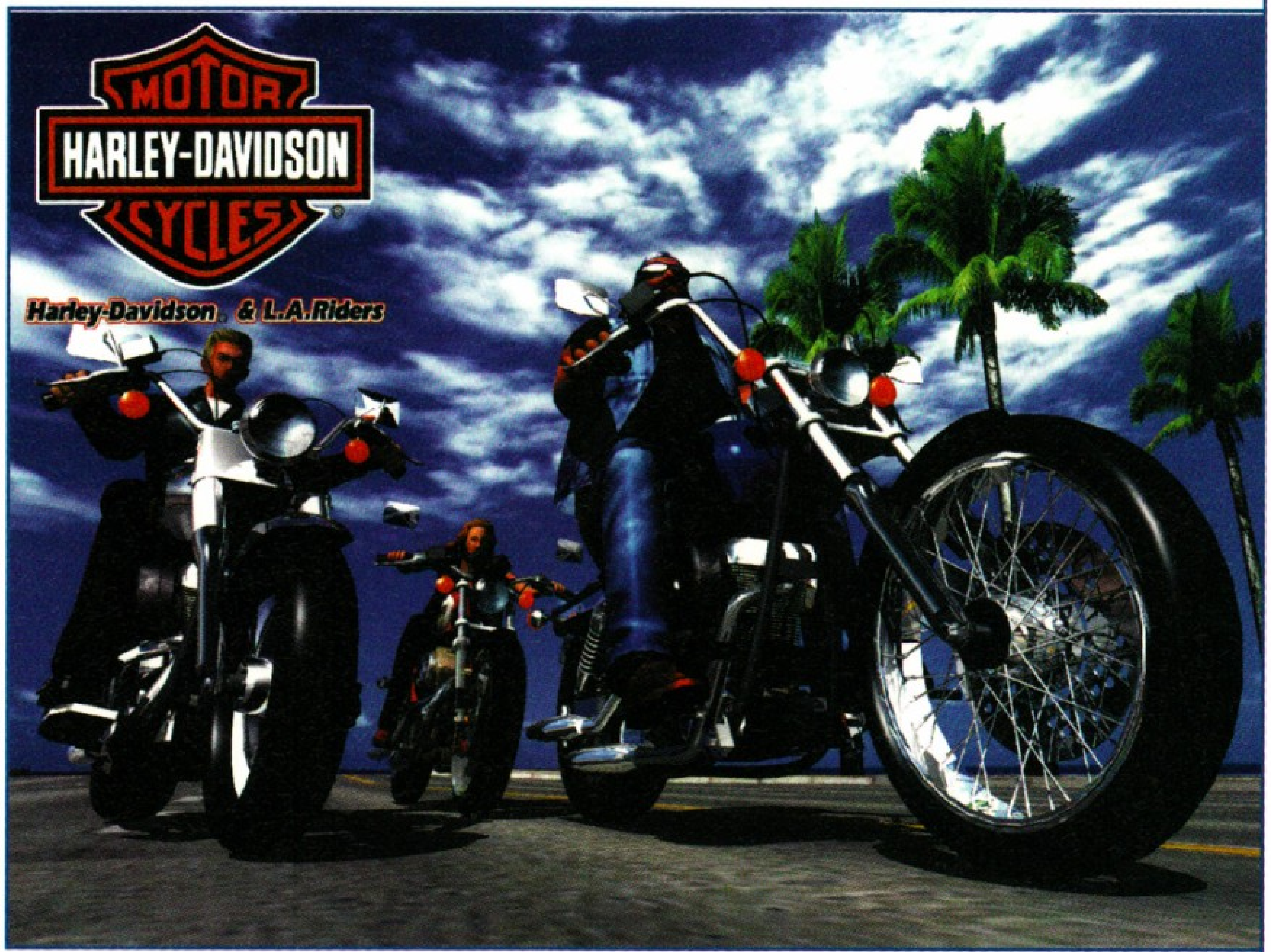




HARLEY-DAVIDSON & LA RIDERS

BY	AM1
BOARD	MODEL 3
TYPE	DRIVING
COMPLETE	90%





With development work virtually completed on AM1's awesome chopper sensation, Sega have released information regarding the game's Model 3 hardware. It seems that Harley-Davidson & LA Riders is the first Sega game to make use of the Model 3: Step 2 board. What's that you say? Well, up 'til now, Sega have been using a standard Model 3 board for all their next generation arcade games. However, improvements and upgrades in the hardware mean that the Model 3 board is essentially a brand new piece of coin-op kit. So while the likes of VF3, Scud Race and The Lost World may have looked mightily impressive Sega Rally 2, Daytona 2, Harley Davidson and forthcoming Model 3 coin-ops will be even better.

BIGGER IS BETTER

So, just what exactly are the major differences between Model 3: Step 1 and Step 2? First of all, the board's clock speed has been increased from 100MHz to 166MHz. This means that Sega can use more special effects on screen at the same time without slowing down the processor. Secondly, no matter what kind of shading or texture maps they use on the polygons, the Step 2 will always display 1,000,000 polygons per second. Although on paper the Model 3 has always been technically able to do this, in reality applying goroud shading and other effects has always slowed downed the processing power of the board. Simply put you could say that the Model 3 is almost twice as powerful as it was before!

As Sega's first Model 3: Step 2 game, Harley-Davidson & LA Riders is an excellent example of what we can expect from future AM arcade titles. In order to recreate the bustling city streets of LA, AM1 have included nearly 1000 cars and over 2000 people into the city map. With wide open, building-packed streets, the game certainly makes full use of the new Model 3's abilities!











Get your motor running with AM1's Harley Davidson.



The game uses an enhanced version of the Model 3 board.



Can you find the hidden biker's bum-crack mode? Lee has.

ASTRA SUPERSTARS

BY	SUNSOFT
BOARD	UNKNOWN
TYPE	2D BEAT 'EM UP
COMPLETE	65%

It's hard to believe, but Sunsoft appear to be taking the same route employed by All Japan Pro-Wrestling by developing a hit Saturn game and then porting it over to an arcade cabinet. The idea is that both coin-op fans and Saturn owners will benefit from versions of the game, but Sunsoft are promising features in both versions that won't be in the other. The other unusual aspect of this deal is that while the Saturn game is virtually complete, the arcade version is just over halfway finished! Whether this means Sunsoft are adding extra characters, special moves or unique gameplay modes has yet to be determined. However, as Astra Superstars uses a variation of SNK's proven sprite-handling hardware, it's a safe bet that the arcade game will be both fast and smooth. We'll bring you full details of Sunsoft's new 2D beat 'em up in next month's exhaustive AOU Show report.













The arcade version of Astra Superstars should be every bit as fast-paced and playable as its console counterpart.

FALLEN ANGELS

BY	PSIKYO
BOARD	UNKNOWN
TYPE	2D BEAT 'EM UP
COMPLETE	75%



Sickly green skin, baggy dungarees and a slack jaw. Remind you of anyone? Hint: his name rhymes with "me gutter."





There are currently eight playable characters in the game.

Psikyo, famous for their high quality shooting games, such as Strikers 1945, Sol Divide and Zero Gunner, have decided to produce their first arcade fighting game. However, whereas Zero Gunner utilised Sega's Model 2 technology, Fallen Angels uses Psikyo's own equally powerful hardware. Development is still at an early stage and we expect that full game details will be released at the AOU show in February.

However, Psikyo have released the character artwork and a few screenshots of the game and as usual the illustrations themselves deserve attention. All the artwork in Sol divide was drawn by the legendary artist Katsuya Terada, who also produced the excellent illustrations for Virtua Fighter. This time, Psikyo have had their game art produced by the renowned designer Shinichi Morioka (who's actually very famous in Japan). His striking style immediately adds great depth to each character's image. At present there are eight characters in total: six men and two women.



Psikyo seem to have taken game ideas from Capcom and SNK.





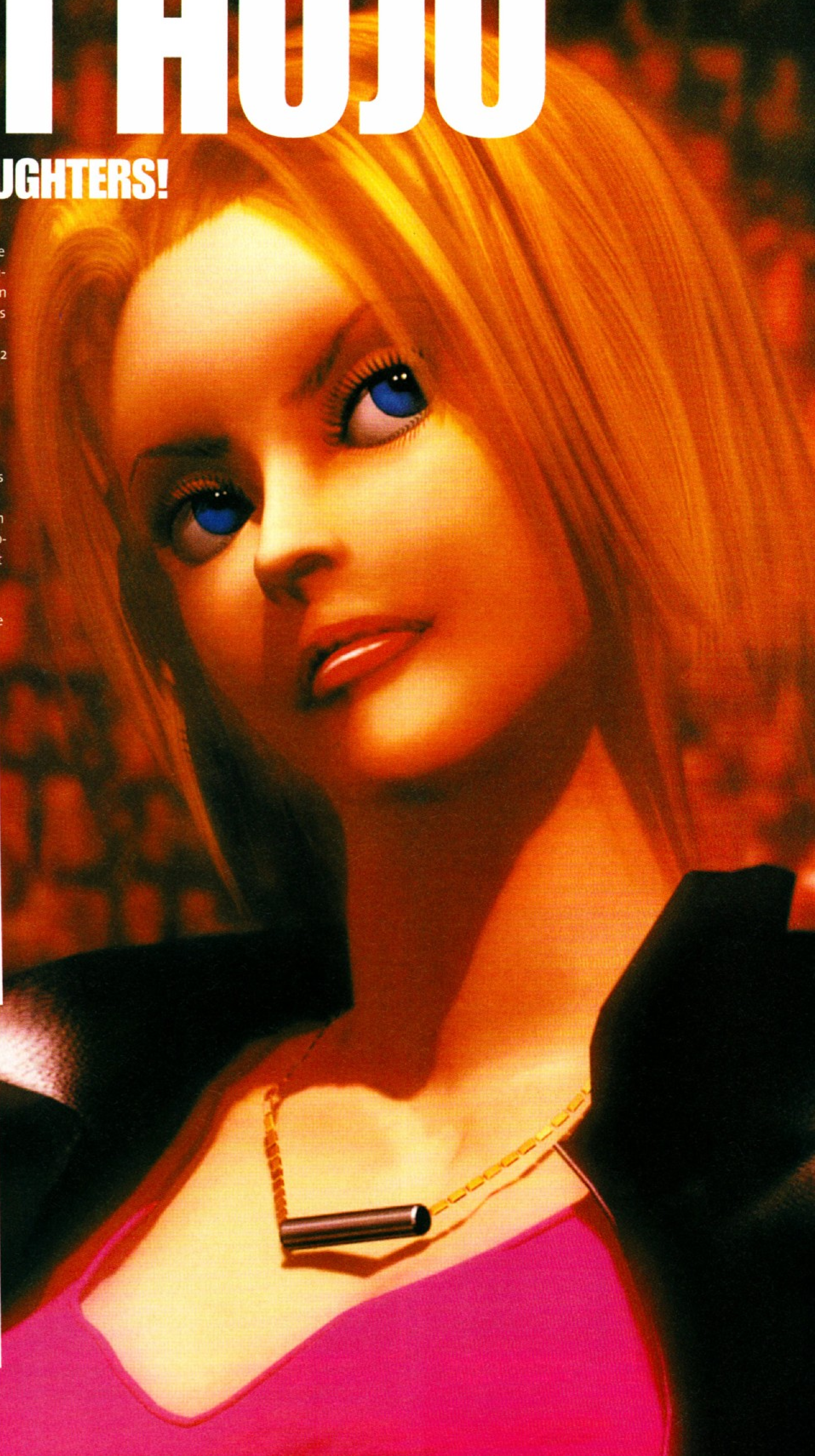
Haley Ness: He has a wrist-mounted weapon device.
Cool: The main game character, but only 13 years-old.
Torao Onikawara: A powerful martial artist.
Haiji Mibu: A bouncer and possibly Cool's main rival.
Taro: Some sort of "Frankenstein's monster."
Luchio Rosshi: A rather sickly looking Italian!
Yuiren & Yuiran: Beautiful twin sisters.

Fallen Angles is set in the year 2010 in a small city that was separated from the main continent by a massive earthquake. Despite superior technology, the city didn't escape the damage caused by the disaster. The city is now desolate place known by the locals as EDEN. With its standard one-on-one action, dashes, power-bars and counters, Fallen Angels looks set to be every bit as popular as the SNK games it appears to be inspired by.

and finally...

NAGI HOJO

LOCK UP YOUR DAUGHTERS!



With the likes of Sarah Bryant and Candy taking the high concept of the video game "babe" into psychotic territory (brainwashing and schizophrenia are commonplace in the scenarios of AM division females!), the question has to be, how do you beat that?

With creations like Sakura in Street Fighter Alpha 2 we saw the advent of the schoolgirl knicker-flashing fighting machine. And if you think you can't top that, just get a load of Nagi Hojo from AM3's Last Bronx.

With her black plastic jacket, mid-riff exposing croptop and tattered tights, she looks just a bit on the, er, dodgy side. But get this: Nagi is the first videogames homosexual, a lesbian no less (cue gags on the lines of "curing her" from the male readership), infatuated with the "boyish Yoko". She also despises men, which is probably why they all get the shit kicked out of them in Last Bronx so regularly.

So... a mad man-hating gang leader lesbian dressed like a hooker! Where can those wacky Japanese go from here? We don't know, but put it this way, we can't wait to find out...



What better picture to show Nagi's... tendancies?



Nagi hates men. Hence the knee-capping seen here.

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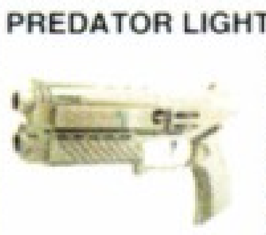
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